

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Rock Creek Ranger Station

Other names/site number: 24CB1198

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

2. Location

Street & number: Custer Gallatin National Forest, Beartooth Ranger District

City or town: Red Lodge State: Montana County: Carbon

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

____ national ____ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ____ B x C ____ D

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-top: 1px solid black; padding-top: 5px;"> <div style="width: 60%;">Signature of certifying official/Title:</div> <div style="width: 35%;">Date</div> </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding-top: 5px;">State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</div>	
<p>In my opinion, the property __meets __does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-top: 1px solid black; padding-top: 5px;"> <div style="width: 60%;">Signature of commenting official:</div> <div style="width: 35%;">Date</div> </div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; padding-top: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;">Title :</div> <div style="width: 50%;">State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</div> </div> </div>	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☒

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☐
District ☒
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Government Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Government Office/Public Works

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Rustic log

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: foundation: CONCRETE: walls: WOOD/Log:
roof: SHINGLE

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Rock Creek Ranger Station Complex Historic District, which encompasses approximately 9.49 acres, is located within the boundaries of Custer-Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) in Carbon County, Montana. The district comprises a cluster of buildings, structures, and sites—herein referred to as the headquarters area. A maintenance yard, located to the west of the headquarters area was developed in the 1970s and is excluded from the boundaries of the historic district. The property was initially developed as a ranger station facility in 1908 as one of four ranger district offices within the Beartooth National Forest (now CGNF). The earliest infrastructure at the site consisted of a one-room cabin, a barn, shed, root cellar, and pole shop, all which were subsequently demolished. Between 1923 and 1927, a second wave of improvements occurred which included the construction of a log residence (Main Cabin), latrine, and coal house, and the original access road realigned. The main cabin remains in place from this period of development. Between 1936 and 1938, two garages, a barn, and storehouse were constructed, all which remain today. In 1962, following the establishment of a new district headquarters on the south edge of Red Lodge, the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex was downgraded to a storage and over-flow housing facility.¹ The complex, which continues to be used as a work center for the Beartooth District, retains overall integrity with the majority of the standing buildings and structures representing the second and third episode of construction. Contributing resources present within the district boundaries consist of five buildings, two structures, and two sites. Noncontributing resources consist of two buildings, one site, and five structures.

¹ Dean Bassett, personal communication to Janene Caywood, February 28, 1989.

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Narrative Description

The Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District (known today as the Rock Creek Work Center) is located at the base of the eastern slope of the Beartooth Mountains to the north of the West Fork of Rock Creek in Carbon County, Montana. Red Lodge, the closest city to the complex, is located approximately 2.5 miles to the northeast. The historic district is accessed via a gated and graveled road that originates at Ski Run Road and continues downslope and southwest, across a historic irrigation ditch, for approximately 865 feet (0.16 mile) before branching to the southwest and northeast. The northeastern-trending road provides access to a group of buildings, structures, and sites, herein referred to as the headquarters area, and the southwestern road extends approximately 890 feet (0.17 mile) to a maintenance yard (commonly referred to as the “bone yard”). Two buildings, a concrete dynamite shed and an oil house of log construction, are located within the maintenance yard. Although the oil house appears to be historic in age, this western maintenance yard area is excluded from the District boundaries as its establishment occurred in the 1970s and its use is not associated with the historical development of the Ranger Station complex.

The first development on the property pre-dates Forest Service management of the land and consists of two irrigation ditches constructed in the late 1800s to provide water to nearby landowners in Red Lodge. The land, which comprises the historic district, was designated as part of the Absaroka Forest Reserve in 1902 and the Forest Service began to construct infrastructure for a ranger station in 1908. Original ranger improvements included a one-room cabin, a barn, a shed, a root cellar, and a pole shop, all located along an unnamed road to the north of the West Fork of Rock Creek; none of these remain. Between 1923 and 1927, the shed and pole shop were condemned and destroyed and a log residence, latrine, and coal house added to the headquarters area. Also during this time, the original access road was realigned, a stacked stone wall added in front of the second log residence, the barn relocated to the southwest of the original one-room cabin, and the original root cellar replaced with a new concrete structure. All of the newly-constructed buildings and structures, save the 1925 Main Cabin, would be classified as “vernacular” in that they were not subject for formal design. However, these buildings, as well as the 1925 cabin designed by Forest Service employee Thomas Buckley, incorporated elements of the “Rustic” architectural style, which drew its inspiration from the natural setting, as well as other regional architectural forms, and used native materials, such as logs and stone in construction. The Main Cabin, stacked stone wall, and access road are the only extant resources from this 1920s era of development.

During the period from 1936 to 1938, a barn, storehouse, and two garages were constructed, three of which drew heavily from the Forest Service’s 1935 manual on the construction and maintenance of buildings, the first architectural style and construction guide developed by the Forest Service. The architectural plans put forth by this division also emphasized a Rustic architectural style. These plans were not “high-style” designs but more modest in nature to accommodate the practical needs of administrative facilities. Limited building and structural improvements were made in the post-World War II era. In 1962, the Forest Service constructed a new ranger station complex in Red Lodge and the function of the Rock Creek Ranger Station changed to a seasonal work center. Documentation on file indicates that a tackhouse was

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constructed, and/or moved to the property in 1969. The date of construction for the outhouse on site is unknown, but it appears of recent construction.

As a whole the district comprises of nine contributing resources consisting of five buildings, two structures, and two sites. Noncontributing resources consist of two buildings, one site, and five structures. The two non-contributing buildings do not date to the period of significance, three of the structures consist of irrigation ditches not associated with the development of the ranger station, and the remaining noncontributing structures were constructed outside the period of significance.

BUILDINGS

Main Cabin (1 contributing building, 1925)

The Main Cabin (also known as Building #1010) is the earliest building remaining within the Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District (Photograph 1.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0001 and Photograph 2.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0002). The one-and-a-half story cabin was built during the summer of 1925 in accordance with plans developed by Thomas W. Buckley of the Regional Office of the Forest Service on August 28, 1924.² The cabin rests on a raised concrete foundation above a partial basement. Walls are constructed of full logs hauled to the property from Camp Nelson on the West Fork of Rock Creek and Camp Beaver above Basin Creek.³ The log ends are cut at an angle, tapering out from bottom to top, and are joined with ventral saddle notches daubed with cement and chinked with lathe. The steep, side-gabled roof is covered with wooden shingles and has exposed purlins and rafter ends. Wooden shakes also cover the gable ends of the cabin. An interior slope brick chimney extends from the apex of the roof at the eastern end of the building.

The main (northern) façade of the building features an open shed-roofed entry porch supported by log columns and accessed via a concrete step that leads to a raised concrete slab. An enclosed porch covered by a hipped roof extends off the east facade. A series of three concrete steps provide access to the enclosed porch. The exterior walls of the enclosed porch are sheathed with wooden shingles.

The front, north elevation, one panel/three lite door sports a decorative ledge. An attached screen door fronts it. The enclosed, hipped roof, east elevation porch contains a three panel/one lite door approached by concrete steps. The door inside the porch is board-and-batten. Windows in the main building are six-lite hopper, six-over-one-lite double-hung, and six-by-six-lite sliding. The log surfaces adjacent to the cabin's doors and windows are hewn flat.

² J. Bolton and A. Hubber, *Rock Creek Ranger Station National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (draft)*, 1990, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

³ L. F. Jefferson, Acting Forest Supervisor, Informal Proposal for Supplies, May 23, 1925, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

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Storehouse/Fire Cache (1 contributing building, estimated 1936-1938)

The storehouse/fire cache (Building #2301) consists of a one-story, rectangular plan log building featuring saddle notching (Photograph 3. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0003). The building measures 16 feet long by 14 feet wide. A shallow front-gabled roof protects the building which rests on a concrete foundation. The log ends are cut at an angle to taper out from top to bottom. The exterior of the walls are daubed with concrete and the interior walls are chinked with split poles. The interior of the building is accessed by a single wood door with two plywood panels sporting diagonal wood strapping or cross-bracing on its main (northern) façade. The symmetrically-placed entry has a concrete stoop and is flanked by two six-lite fixed windows. Paired six-by-six-lite sliding windows are present on the remaining three elevations. All of the windows have wood surrounds. The roof is covered with wood shingles and features an interior slope brick chimney, and exposed rafter ends and purlins.

The 1983 Forest Service facility inventory provides a construction date of 1938 for the building; however, its appearance in a 1936 photograph suggests it's presence at the station at least by this date. Additionally, the building appears to have originally served at District 2, relocated to the Rock Creek Ranger Station sometime in the early to mid-1930s and used as a warehouse, and then moved again, possibly in 1936 to its present location.

Barn (1 contributing building, 1938)

The barn (Building #2401) is a one story, log building with a rectangular floor plan (Photograph 4. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0004). The building rests on a concrete foundation. The log walls are joined with square notches. The exterior walls are chinked with lathe and daubed with cement, and the interior walls have split pole chinking. The fenestration on the main (southern) façade consists of a Dutch door flanked by two pairs of six-lite hopper windows. An additional Dutch door is present on the eastern gable elevation and a three-panel wood door is located in the southern façade. A concrete pad leads to the main southern entry while the eastern door is accessed via a wooden staircase. The wood staircase at the southern entry has been removed. The building has a saltbox roof covered with wooden shingles. The roof displays exposed rafter ends and the apex has a galvanized ridge cap with end balls. The interior floor plan consists of three stalls and a tack room. A 1990 draft NRHP nomination form and the 2001 inspection form state the barn was constructed in 1938; however, a 1936 photograph indicates the building sat at this location at that time. The later construction date of 1938 is used to err on the side of caution (Figure 1).

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Figure 1. Barn within the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex, ca. 1936 (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

Two Stall Garage (1 contributing building, 1936)

The two stall garage (Building #2200) is a one-and-a-half story, wood frame building with a rectangular floor plan (Photograph 5. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0005). It sits on a raised concrete foundation. Exterior walls of the 460 square foot building are sheathed in drop siding with quarter board trim. The front-gabled roof is covered with corrugated metal, has exposed rafter ends, and an interior slope brick chimney. The western (main) façade contains two large sliding wooden garage doors; the southern elevation contains a single five-panel wood mandoor. A small hinged loft door is present in the gable end. Windows consist of three-lite, four-lite, and six-lite fixed, and paired six-by-six-lite sliding. All windows have wood frame surrounds and sills. A small wooden storage box for a fire extinguisher is located adjacent to the garage doors on the northern facade. A facility inventory completed by the Forest Service in 1983 for the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex indicates that the garage was constructed in 1938; however, the building appears in a 1936 photograph of the complex in its current location, suggesting that it was constructed at least two years prior to this date (Figure 2). At the time of the inventory, the building was being used as a “sign shop”⁴.

⁴ USDA Forest Service, *Northern (01) Region Facility Management System Site Inventory Report – Verification Report 200, Rock Creek Work Center*, 1983, p. 111, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT.

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Figure 2. Rock Creek Ranger Station complex, ca. 1936, showing the original L-shaped cabin at center with the new dwelling (Building #1010) located at right and the garage and “barn” (now the two stall garage [Building #2200]) at left (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

Multi-Stall Garage (1 contributing building, 1938)

The multi-stall garage (Building #2302) consists of a one-story wood frame building with a rectangular floor plan (Photograph 6. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0006). The building rests on a raised concrete foundation and has a saltbox roof covered with wooden shingles. The roof displays exposed rafter ends and a galvanized ridge cap with end balls. Its exterior walls are sheathed with board-and-batten painted white. The interior of the building contains four stalls accessed by a series of sliding garage doors on the southern (main) façade; the doors are constructed of vertical boards with cross bracing. Immediately to the east are paired hollow core mandooors accessed from a concrete pad. Two-lite fixed windows flank the double entry, and a row of boarded-over windows are present on the eastern elevation. A small storage box for a fire extinguisher is mounted on the west wall and an electrical box with a pipe is present on the western façade. The 1983 inventory also provides a build date of 1938 for this building. The form noted the building containing five rather than six stalls;⁵ a 1978 Forest Service inventory identified the building as a “4-stall garage.”⁶ These documents suggest that

⁵ USDA Forest Service, *Northern (01) Region Facility Management System Site Inventory Report – Verification Report 200, Rock Creek Work Center*, 1983, p. 115F, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT.

⁶ USDA Forest Service, *Inventory of Real Property, Beartooth District*, 1978, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT; USDA Forest Service, *Northern (01) Region Facility Management*

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the interior floorplan possibly changed since its original construction. A historic photograph of the building confirms that its exterior has not changed since 1976 (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Multi- stall garage building (Building #2302), ca. 1976, facing northeast (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

Tack House (1 noncontributing building, 1969)

The tack house (Building #2308) is a one story, log bearing building with a rectangular floor plan (Photograph 7. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0007). The shallow, front-gabled roof is covered with wood shingles and displays exposed rafter ends. Wood shingles cover the gable ends of the building. The building rests on concrete blocks set on top of a concrete foundation, suggesting that the current building was moved to this location after the original building was razed. Walls are constructed of logs joined with saddle notches and daubed with cement with split pole chinking used in the interior. Log ends are cut at an angle to taper out from the top to the bottom. Fenestration consists of a single hollow core door on the main (southern) façade fronted by a small concrete pad, and two windows openings on the eastern façade. One window opening is currently covered with plywood, and the second window contains a six-lite awning window. The condition of the extant window suggests recent reconditioning. A facility inventory completed by the Forest Service in 1983 for the Rock Creek

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Ranger Station complex indicates construction of the tack house occurred in 1969.⁷ Although this date could indicate the year in which the building was moved to its current location within the complex, evidence to corroborate this has not been found; therefore, the building is considered a noncontributing resource.

Outhouse (1 noncontributing building, date unknown)

This one-story, rectangular wood frame building sits on a pre-cast concrete vault designed especially for pit toilets. The gable roof is covered with fiberglass and has exposed rafter ends (Photograph 8. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0008). Board-and-batten siding covers the exterior walls. The outhouse has a hollow core door. Gable ends are screened and the side walls contain louvered vents. As the outhouse is of recent construction, it is considered noncontributing.

Stone Wall/Foundation (1 contributing site, date unknown)

An L-shaped segment of a dry laid stone wall or foundation stands southwest of the storehouse/fire cache (Building #2301). The feature measures approximately 8 feet long by 1-foot wide (Photograph 9. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0009). The wall varies from 1-foot to 4 feet in height and displays 4 to 8 courses. The rocks vary in size, with the larger rocks typically placed at or near the bottom of the wall, and smaller rocks used for the top courses. The wall appears to be partially built into the slope as it extends south toward the West Fork Ditch Company Canal.

Two possibilities exist for the function of the feature. Given its size, it may represent the remains of the original earth and rock cellar built on the property around 1908. The cellar remained in use until the 1930s when it was razed and replaced with a new concrete cellar. However, it is also possible that the structure represents remnants of the “storehouse,” a building depicted on the 1931 improvement plan as being “proposed” for construction in the same general area as this feature. A description of the proposed building is not provided in the plan. Either way, the feature dates to the period of significance for the property and undoubtedly served as an ancillary building or structure for the ranger station complex. As such, it is considered to contribute to the overall significance of the district.

Stone Building Remnants (1 contributing site, date unknown)

This feature consists of the remains of a historic-age building or structure (Photograph 10. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0010). The remains are located in a clearing northeast of the two stall garage (Building #2200) and consist of a mounded area confined by a rock wall on its eastern, southern, and northern sides. Several large boulders are also located in

⁷ USDA Forest Service, *Northern (01) Region Facility Management System Site Inventory Report – Verification Report 200, Rock Creek Work Center*, 1983, p. 117F, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT.

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the vicinity of the feature. The area is identified on the 1931 improvement plan as being the “CP” or central point of the site, and further notes that a large granite boulder with a lead marker stamped “CP” was present in the location. No boulder matching this description was identified in the area, however. A later map dating to 1971 shows a pit toilet also once stood at this location, though the large size of the feature suggests little relationship between the existence of the outhouse and feature. Likely possibilities include the feature represents a foundation, or served as a retaining wall for the soil it constrains. As additional maps of the ranger station do not exist, the function and age of the current structure remains unknown. However, as its condition suggests that it likely dates to the period of significance and is associated with the historical use of the site as a ranger station, it is considered a contributing resource.

Circulation—Access Road (1 contributing structure, early to mid-1920s)

A Forest Service map of the Beartooth National Forest confirms that the Rock Creek Ranger Station was accessible by road as early as 1912.⁸ Interestingly, this road is shown on the map as extending to the south of the ranger station, rather than to the north, as it is currently runs (Figure 4). This road, which is assumed to be the precursor to the West Fork of Rock Creek Road, continues past the ranger station to the west, where it eventually terminates at a creek crossing. Another map, dating to 1918, shows the road as following the same general alignment.

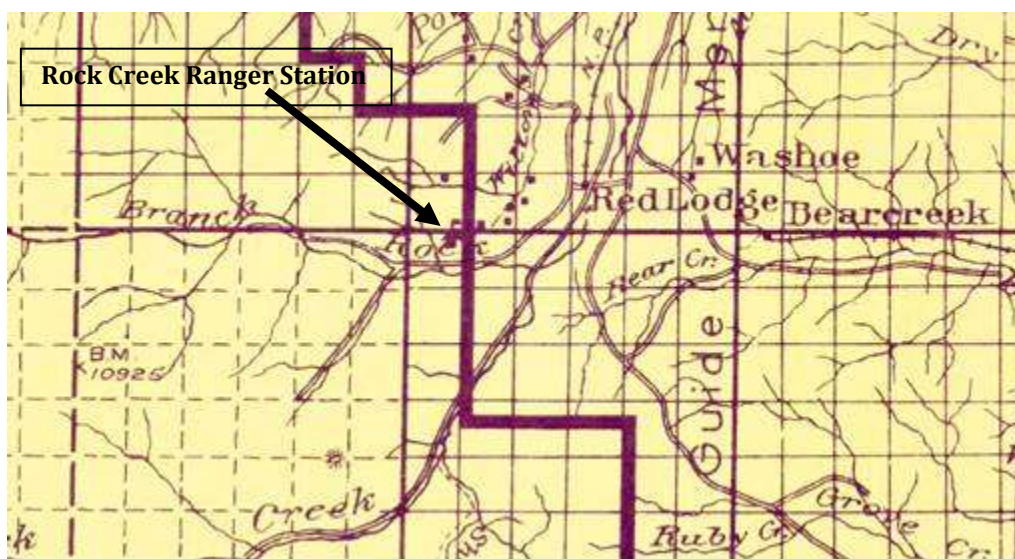


Figure 4. Beartooth National Forest, 1912. Forest Service map showing the road leading to the Rock Creek Ranger Station (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

⁸ USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

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An historic overview photograph of the ranger station that dates to 1927 shows the road. Its existence in the photograph around the Main Cabin strongly suggests its construction occurred in the mid-1920, likely around the same time as the construction as the Main Cabin. In the photograph, the road is surfaced with gravel and wide enough to accommodate two cars (Figure 5). The 1931 improvement plan map for the Rock Creek Ranger Station depicts the road originating off the historic West Fork Road (West Fork of Rock Creek Road) following the same alignment to the southwest as at present. As it approaches the southwest end of the ranger station complex it turns east toward the building cluster where it again splits with a segment continuing east and running north of the Main Cabin, and a segment continuing south. The south trending segment west of the building complex splits once again with a segment continuing south over the West Fork Ditch Company Canal (the Green Ditch on the 1931 improvement plan map) and the West Fork of Rock Creek, and the other segment turning east, looping around the Main Cabin to rejoin the northern segment.



Figure 5. Overview of the Rock Creek Ranger Station, ca. 1927, showing the looped access road in the headquarters area (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

Although changes have occurred to the circulation pattern depicted on the 1931 map, much of the alignment remains the same at present. The road continues to originate from the West Fork of Rock Creek Road, where it passes through a locked gate and continues over the historic Maryott Ditch along the slope of a hill (Photograph 11.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0011). At the bottom of the hill, the road branches to the east and west; the eastern branch following the original historic alignment leading to the Rock Creek Ranger Station (Photograph 12.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0012). The more recent western branch leads to a

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non-historic maintenance facility outside the district boundary. Within the ranger station building complex, some changes to the circulation pattern have occurred. Many of these changes likely relate to the removal of many of the resources dating to the initial (1908) and second (mid-1920s) episodes of building by the subsequent construction associated with the 1930s improvements. The segment of road that continued south including the spur that crossed the West Fork Ditch Company Canal (the Green Ditch on the 1931 improvement plan map) and West Fork of Rock Creek no longer exists, nor does the segment that turned east and looped south of the Main Cabin to rejoin the northern segment. Heavy vegetation obscuring these former segments indicate their lack of use for an extended period of time, corroborating the likelihood of changes to the circulation occurring with the 1930s improvements.

A small segment of a two-track road extending east off the main headquarters loop road on the 1931 improvement plan map has been subsumed as part of the present road alignment of the property. It is likely this also occurred with the construction of the multi-stall garage (Building 2302) at the east end of the property in 1938. The road continues to be surfaced with gravel and has an average width of 12 feet, although wider sections are present along the portion of the road within the headquarters area. Although the road was altered from its original layout, the present alignment reflects much of its historic configuration and as such, is considered to be a contributing resource.

Stacked Rock Fence (1 contributing structure, 1925)

A low rock wall that served as a fence parallels a segment of the southern edge of the access road immediately north of the Main Cabin (Building #1010). The feature, which measures roughly 190 feet in length, is constructed of six to seven courses of locally-sourced rock of varying sizes; generally, the bottom course is formed by boulders, some which measure nearly 1-foot long by 0.5-foot wide. The size of the material comprising the upper courses is generally smaller, cobbles size (Photograph 13. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0013). Some of the rocks appear to have been faced, and some are rounded. The feature measures roughly 3 feet wide, stands approximately 3 feet high, and follows an east-west alignment. Three openings occur in the feature—one north of the main cabin, and two to the northeast. The opening immediately north of the cabin displays the remains of a metal turn-style embedded in the concrete walk leading to the cabin's front porch. The 1931 complex map suggests the wall originally extended to the west, east, and around the rear of the cabin as well. Although historical records lack information regarding the feature, it was likely constructed in 1925 by the Forest Service in association with the Main Cabin. A 1931 Forest Service memorandum notes that the main cabin was surrounded by a "rock fence," indicating the feature was built in its current location by this time.⁹

Bridge over the West Fork Ditch Company Canal (1 noncontributing structure, 1990/2009)

⁹ USDA Forest Service, *Improvement – Beartooth Ranger Station Plans Rock Creek Ranger Station*, 1931, on file at the CGNF Office, Billings, MT.

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A wooden deck bridge with low wood guardrails spans the West Fork Ditch Company Canal and provides access to the multi-stall garage (Building #2302). The bridge is 18 feet long by 10 feet wide and rests on simple concrete abutments (Photograph 14).

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0014). The abutments and channel immediately beneath the bridge are reinforced with cobbles. A map of the complex indicates that a bridge was built at this location as early as 1931; however, it was replaced in 1990 and modified in 2009. The feature is a noncontributing resource of the district.

County Poor Farm Ditch (1 non-contributing structure, 1916-1917)

Similar to the Maryott Ditch, the County Poor Farm Ditch extends from the West Fork of Rock Creek and flows in a generally southwest to northeast direction. The ditch is located near the middle of the district, north of the main cabin (Building #1010) and the post and pole corral. The channel of the ditch is unlined and measures approximately 3 feet wide and 1.5 feet deep. The ditch flows beneath the current access road near the base of the hill via a corrugated metal pipe culvert. Additional diversion structures or features were not observed.

The ditch is identified on the 1931 improvement plan map as the “County Poor Farm Ditch,” although historical records suggest it may have also been called the Close-Virtue Ditch. The ditch was likely constructed in 1916–1917 to provide irrigation water to agricultural fields located at the County Poor Farm, an indigent residence at the southeastern end of Red Lodge. The fields encompassed 8 acres of land to the rear (west) of the facility’s dormitory style building. In 1917, the fields were planted with potatoes and vegetables by Red Lodge citizens, the Chamber of Commerce, and county commissioners as a means to help make the home self-sustaining.¹⁰ Historical records confirm that the ditch was in use during the early 1970s. The ditch was dry at the time of the reconnaissance survey and its current status is unknown. As its use was not associated with Forest Service administrative facilities occurring on the property during the period of significance, the structure is considered noncontributing to the District.

Maryott Ditch (1 noncontributing structure, 1930)

The Maryott Ditch is located just below the McDonald Ditch in the northern portion of the district (Photograph 15). The earthen ditch currently flows beneath the ranger station access road via a 4-foot diameter steel pipe culvert near its intersection with Ski Run Road. Additional culverts are located to the east and west of the road. The culvert west of the road consists of 1.5-foot diameter steel pipe (Photograph 16. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0016), and the culvert east side of the road is constructed of concrete with a mortared stone headwall (Photograph 17. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0017). A low concrete retaining wall that measures approximately 6 feet long by 0.5 feet wide by 3 feet high lines the side of the ditch on the west side of the road adjacent to the steel pipe culvert. The channel east of the road is lined with rocks.

¹⁰ Beverly Rue Wellington, *Red Lodge Landmarks* (Red Lodge, MT: The Carbon County News, 1992).

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The Maryott Ditch was originally built by John “J. L.” Maryott in 1887 to provide irrigation water to his fields located west of Red Lodge.¹¹ Use of this portion of the ditch and its original headworks were discontinued in 1930. That same year, crews installed a new headgate and excavated the section of ditch that currently flows through the district. By 1943, water transported by the 1930s portion of the ditch was being used to irrigate 750 acres of land owned by both J. L. and his brother Thomas. Five recorded or active water rights for the ditch have been granted in the modern era. The ditch continues to flow today, although there is no formal association in charge of its operation. Instead, the current owners maintain the ditch and its associated structures on a regular basis.

West Fork Ditch Company Canal (1 noncontributing structure, 1893)

This 14-foot wide by 4-6-foot deep irrigation canal flows in a generally northeast direction to the south of the headquarters area (Photograph 18.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0018); the West Fork of Rock Creek is located to the north. A concrete and steel headgate serves as the point-of-diversion for the canal and is also located within the district, approximately 220 feet southwest of the main cabin (Building #1010) (Photograph 19. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0019). The headgate is situated along the north edge of the creek and has a worm-driven steel wheel used to raise and lower a steel gate to control the diversion of water from the West Fork of Rock Creek into the ditch. The headgate measures 4 feet wide by 4 feet high by 1-foot thick and the gate measures 14 inches in diameter. The age of the diversion structure is not known. A bridge spans the canal in the eastern half of the district, allowing access to the multi-stall garage on its eastern side (see Photograph 14. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0014).

Research suggests that the canal was constructed by William N. Hunter, Anthony Chaffin and Prestey C. Hicok who incorporated the West Fork Ditch Company in 1893 and that same year, appropriated 2,000 miner’s inches of water from the West Fork of Rock Creek within Section 6 of T8S, R20E.¹² The ditch was intended to provide irrigation water to eight sections of land located within T7S, R20E. The ditch remains in use and continues to carry large amounts of water. As the ditch is not associated with Forest Service administrative activities occurring at the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex, it is considering noncontributing to the District.

Wood Post-and-Rail Corral (1 noncontributing structure, ca. 1972)

This irregular-shaped structure measures approximately 70 feet long by 30 feet wide and stands northwest of the barn (Building #2401) just south of the County Poor Farm Ditch (Photograph 20. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0020). The eastern end of the structure abuts

¹¹ Mike W. Bergstrom, *Custer National Forest Heritage Resource Program Site Record for 24CB1695 (Maryott Ditch)*, 2001, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Billings Office, Billings, MT.

¹² Jesse Adams, Brian Herbel, and David Fincham, *Custer National Forest Heritage Resource Program Site Record for 24CB2041 (West Fork Ditch Company Canal)*, 2006, p. 4, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Billings Office, Billings, MT.

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the barn's western façade and a narrow chute extends off the western end and leads northwest towards the irrigation ditch. The corral is constructed of lodgepole posts set approximately 5 to 7 feet apart, with four horizontal rails nailed in place between them. A swinging gate with a log headframe is present near the southwest end of the structure. The structure appears to have been constructed sometime after 1972, when a 1971 engineering report recommended that existing corral be moved for sanitary purposes.¹³ Although serving an important role to the ranger station, the construction date of the corral occurs outside the district's period of significance with the result it is considered to be a noncontributing resource.

Bridge Remnant (1 non-contributing site, date unknown)

Remnants of a second bridge spanning the West Fork Ditch Company Ditch are present south of the Main Cabin (Building #1010). The bridge has deteriorated so that only portions of the original wooden abutments remain. Both abutments measure approximately 0.5 feet long by 10 feet wide. The northern abutment is constructed of stacked square timbers; one of the boards was partially buried adjacent to the ditch's channel and the second had fallen into the channel at the time of the survey. A single row of cobbles was also visible beneath the in situ abutment. The southern abutment consists of a square timber placed above a rounded log. Both of these logs remain in place. A modern wooden plank has been placed on top of the wooden abutments forming a narrow footbridge across the ditch (Photograph 21.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0021). The feature retains integrity of location and setting. Prior to its deterioration, the feature, roughly 10 feet wide, would have supported more substantial traffic across the ditch. In addition to the poor integrity of the feature, that fact that no road or trail alignment is visible near the resource indicates its use as a bridge ended years ago and no longer retains integrity of association. The structure has also lost integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and feeling. In addition, the date of construction remains unknown. The feature is considered a noncontributing resource.

Integrity

The construction associated with later station development resulted in the loss of many of the original resources (the L-shaped cabin, earth and concrete root cellars, barn, wood shed, pole shop, flag pole, fencelines, and hitching posts). Although only one possible element that dates to the original period of construction remains, a stone wall/foundation that may be associated with the 1908 cellar, the second (mid-1920s) and third (1936-1938) waves of construction when the Forest Service invested in additional infrastructure to address the needs of the station retain a significant presence. The resources that remain from these latter two periods of construction retain sufficient integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, setting, location, and association, to impart their function and importance in their mission as the Rock Creek Ranger

¹³ Jim McGill, *Engineering Report for Rock Creek Work Center Near Red Lodge, Montana*. Missoula, MT: United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Region 1, 1971, p. 1.

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Station. The subsequent episodes of construction reflect the appearance and character of an evolving working ranger station.

Integrity of design, materials and workmanship remain strong. Standard plans developed by the Forest Service in the 1920s and 1930s, which embodies the agency's desire to blend the infrastructure with the natural environment, are apparent. Design changes reflect the evolving nature of the complex, with few changes having occurred since the late 1930s. The resources within the district represent two distinct periods of Forest Service administrative facility development. The earliest log building at the complex, the 1925 Main Cabin, sits amongst the trees displaying early rustic log cabin architecture common at the time. The remaining buildings and structures constructed in the late 1930s retain materials and workmanship which convey the Forest Service's approach to facilities design and construction developed during the mid-to-late 1930s. The buildings and structures either retain their original log construction, or their wood framing and cladding, foundations, and wood shingle roofs. Nearly all of the contributing buildings also possess their original multi-lite wood frame, fixed, double hung, sliding, or hopper windows. The stone features at the site, regardless of function, all retain the original stone displaying their original construction.

Integrity of location, feeling, association, and setting remain strong as the area remains much as it did throughout the existence of the ranger station. The Main Cabin continues to serve as the focal point of the district as it has since its construction. Historical photographs suggest the possible relocation of a few buildings from other facilities and occasional relocation within the property itself; despite this, the layout remains mostly intact reflecting its use as a ranger station from the mid-1920s through the early 1960s. The heavy vegetation around the district provides a rural setting imparting a feeling of removal from the general surroundings. Although recent residential development immediately east of the Rock Creek Ranger Station has occurred, it has resulted in little integrity loss as the development is largely shielded by intervening vegetation.

After initial modification in the mid-1920s, the current circulation pattern reflects its late-1930s manifestation which continues to the present. A few characteristics dating back to the mid-1920s are still retained; these include the western access road that splits from the West Fork of Rock Creek Road and leads to the complex passing north of the Main Cabin, and the concrete paths leading from the road to the 1925 Main Cabin. In addition, although the bridge presently providing access across the West Fork Ditch Company Canal (referred to as the Green Ditch on the 1931 map) is noncontributing to the district, it replaced an earlier historic bridge that occupied this location, thus retaining the earlier historic circulation pattern at this location.

While the district contains noncontributing resources, several, such as the County Poor Farm Ditch, the Maryott Ditch, and the West Fork Ditch Company Canal, bear no association to the function of the station; however, their presence within the district is benign and does not detract from the district itself.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CONSERVATION

ARCHITECTURE

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Period of Significance

1908–1962

Significant Dates

1908, 1925

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Thomas W. Buckley (Main Cabin-Building #1010 only)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with administrative activities of the Forest Service beginning around 1908 and lasting to 1962. Ranger district headquarters are representative of USDA Forest Service management policies and of the aesthetics that guided the agency's improvements program. It is also eligible for listing under Criterion C for its collection of Rustic style buildings and structures, the majority of which are of log or wood frame construction and represent standard plans developed by the Forest Service in the mid-1930s.

The period of significance for the district is 1908 to 1962. The year 1908 marks the establishment of the station and although most of the features associated with the very initial period of construction no longer remain, the stone wall/foundation likely represents the lone feature dating to that year. Nineteen twenty-five marks the date when the complex's oldest log building—the Main Cabin (Building #1010)—which remains the focal point of the district today, was constructed; it was designed a year earlier by Forest Service architect Thomas W. Buckley. The building served as a residence for rangers of the Rock Creek Ranger District (now the Beartooth District) until 1962, when a new administrative complex for the district was constructed within the adjacent town of Red Lodge. The period of 1908–1962 is believed to best represent the significance of the district under criteria A and C, as it represent the years that the headquarters served as the center of Forest Service administration of the Rock Creek Ranger District.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District is significant at the local level, in the area of *Conservation* for its role as an administrative facility for the Rock Creek Ranger District of the Beartooth, and subsequent Custer National Forest, from 1908 to 1962. The ranger station is one of four original stations established on

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the nascent 1908 Beartooth National Forest, which were reportedly all “centrally located” for the administration of homestead and mining claims, surveys, local timber sales, and Forest Service grazing policy on the Beartooth National Forest.¹⁴ By 1931, the management of the Beartooth National Forest was consolidated to three districts: Rock Creek, Stillwater, and Pryor Mountain. The Rock Creek Ranger Station remained the administrative facility for the Rock Creek Ranger District and in 1943 further forest consolidations caused the Ranger Station to also acquire management responsibilities for the Pryor Mountain District. The Rock Creek Ranger Station retained this district management status until 1962 when the Rock Creek Ranger Station facilities were relocated to Red Lodge. At this point, the Forest Service converted the use of the Rock Creek Ranger Station to a work center.

As noted in the context on Forest Service-owned buildings within Region 1, “the significance of administrative properties lies in their ability to evoke a connection between the historical period of Forest Service development and the present.”¹⁵ While the earliest buildings constructed at the Rock Creek Ranger Station no longer remain, the Main Cabin, which dates to 1925, is representative of an acknowledged need for new ranger housing, separate from an existing office building, which coincided with the planning of the nearby Red Lodge-Cooke City highway. This new road, a joint venture between the Bureau of Public Roads and the Forest Service, was to open “the development of the mineral resources of the Cooke District, the coal mines of Red Lodge, the exploitation of adjacent timber, [and] the development of the Beartooth Plateau region for recreation...” which would require further Forest Service management and oversight of the use of natural resources on forest lands.¹⁶ The subsequent 1930s-era development also evokes a connection to the historic period of management of forest lands. In fact, the majority of the extant development on site dates between 1936 and 1938 and is representative of the need for additional management facilities as the Rock Creek Ranger District expanded to incorporate other, formerly separate, forest districts.

The Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District is also significant at the local level in the area of *Architecture* for its collection of buildings constructed in the “Rustic” architectural style. The Forest Service did not develop standardized regional architectural plans for Forest Service buildings prior to the 1930s, leaving much of the early architecture vernacular in design as local rangers constructed buildings using native materials. In fact, Caywood and others note that those ranger stations located in more remote areas constructed in the period following World War I tended to use log construction.¹⁷ The one-and-a-half story main cabin of the Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District was constructed during the summer of 1925 based upon plans dated August 28, 1924 and developed by Thomas W. Buckley of the Regional Office

¹⁴ USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

¹⁵ Janene Caywood, James McDonald, and Theodore Catton, *Evaluation of Region 1 Forest Service-Owned Buildings for Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places*. Missoula, MT: United States Department of Agriculture, Region 1 Forest Service, 1991, p. 116.

¹⁶ B.K. Kitt and F.E. Thieme, *Reconnaissance Investigation of Red Lodge – Cooke Project*, 1925, p. 1, on file at Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

¹⁷ Janene Caywood, James McDonald, and Theodore Catton, *Evaluation of Region 1 Forest Service-Owned Buildings for Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places*. Missoula, MT: United States Department of Agriculture, Region 1 Forest Service, 1991, p. 74.

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of the Forest Service. This building reflects an early transition from vernacular ranger constructed residences to formally designed “Rustic” style buildings using local materials.¹⁸

The Region One Forest Service used Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) funding in the 1930s to hire young architects, landscape architects and draftsmen to work under its division of engineering. Clyde Fickes oversaw this program and by 1935, Fickes developed the “Improvement Handbook,” renamed the “Region One Handbook, Construction and Maintenance of Forest Service Improvements.”¹⁹ The handbook provided standardized architectural plans for the construction of buildings at ranger stations. The architectural plans put forth by this division emphasized a “Rustic” architectural style which sought to blend buildings into their natural settings. These plans were not “high-style” designs, but more modest in nature to accommodate the practical needs of administrative facilities. Three of the 1930s-era buildings constructed at the Rock Creek Ranger Station, including two garages and a horse barn, were designed in striking similarity to the plans put forth in the 1935 Region One handbook on construction and represent this shift to formalized architectural drawings which emulated a rustic style.²⁰

Development of the Rock Creek Ranger District

The level of active federal management of the forest land within and around the Rock Creek Ranger Station began during the first decade of the twentieth century, following the creation of the Forest Service. On September 4, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt created the Absaroka Forest Reserve via presidential proclamation. The reserve, which included the broader West Fork of Rock Creek canyon and drainage as well as a portion of the Beartooth Plateau, was bordered by Yellowstone National Park to the north and northeast. The following year, the Absaroka Forest Reserve became part of the larger Yellowstone Forest Reserve. The new Yellowstone Forest Reserve was vast and occupied lands in Montana as well as the bordering states of Idaho and Wyoming. Due to its size, in 1903 Special Forest Superintendent A. A. Anderson created four districts within the Preserve for management purposes. These included the Shoshone, Wind River, Absaroka, and Teton districts.

The newly-created Absaroka Division was located entirely within the state of Montana and consisted of more than 1.3 million acres of land.²¹ A 1904 publication on the Absaroka Division noted that lands within the Beartooth Plateau had historically been used for cattle and sheep grazing, timber cutting, and lime quarrying. Within a year of this publication, Congress passed the Transfer Act which created the Bureau of Forestry and transferred management of the forests from the General Land Office (GLO) within the Department of the Interior (DOI), to the Bureau of Forestry within the Department of Agriculture.²² The Yellowstone Forest Reserve came under the purview of the new agency. The creation of the Bureau of

¹⁸ J. Bolton and A. Hubber, *Rock Creek Ranger Station National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (draft)*, 1990, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

¹⁹ Janene Caywood, James McDonald, and Theodore Catton, *Evaluation of Region 1 Forest Service-Owned Buildings for Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places*. Missoula, MT: United States Department of Agriculture, Region 1 Forest Service, 1991, p. 83.

²⁰ Clyde P. Fickes, *Region One Handbook Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements*. Missoula, MT: USDA Forest Service, Region 1, 1935.

²¹ John L. Leiberg, *Forest Conditions in the Absaroka Division of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve, Montana* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904, p. 10), on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

²² Robert D. Baker, Robert S. Maxwell, Victor H. Treat, and Henry C. Dethloff, *Timeless Heritage: A History of the Forest Service in the Southwest* (Washington, D.C.: USDA Forest Service, 1988).

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Forestry, later renamed the Forest Service, saw the beginnings of federal effort to exercise greater control over the reserved forest lands. As part of this process, the old Forest Reserves gradually transformed into a new network of National Forests, smaller and more actively managed than their predecessors.²³

One such example of the new management of forests came with the dissolution of the broader Yellowstone Forest Reserve into seven separate forests in 1908 (Table 1). Also that year, the Custer National Forest was developed from isolated tracts of land in southeastern Montana and northwestern South Dakota previously known as the Otter National Forest. The Custer National Forest was comprised of 590,720 acres with its headquarters located in Miles City, Montana.

Table 1. National forests created from the Yellowstone Forest Reserve on July 1, 1908.²⁴

Forest name	Location	Acreage	Notes
Absaroka	Montana	980,440	Originally established in September 4, 1902; consolidated with Yellowstone National Forest in 1903; reestablished as a separate forest in 1908.
Beartooth	Montana	685,293	
Bonneville	Wyoming	1,627,840	Became the Washakie National Forest in 1917.
Shoshone	Wyoming	1,689,680	Known today as the Shoshone-Washakie National Forest.
Targhee	Idaho & Wyoming	1,479,320	Approximately 75 percent of the forest was, and continues to remain, in Idaho.
Teton	Wyoming	1,991,200	Known today as Bridger-Teton National Forest.
Wyoming	Wyoming	976,320	

The new Beartooth National Forest consisted of lands within Montana and included the eastern portion of the former Absaroka Division of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve, as well as the lands of the former Pryor Mountain National Forest, a separate forest 35 miles to the east, created in 1906 (Figure 6).²⁵ The Beartooth National Forest encompassed 685,293 acres of land and included the Beartooth Plateau and West Fork of Rock Creek. The Beartooth Forest was separated into four management districts including the Pryor Mountain District, Rock Creek District, Stillwater District, and Rosebud District.

²³ Dennis Roth and Gerald W. Williams, *The Forest Service in 1905*, 2003, found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/newcentury/1905%20Renaming%20the%20Forest%20Service.doc>, accessed May 21, 2015.

²⁴ Richard Davis, ed. *Encyclopedia of American Forest Conservation History*, Vol. II (New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1983).

²⁵ USDA Forest Service, *Beartooth National Forest Map*, 1912, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Billings Office, Billings, 1912.

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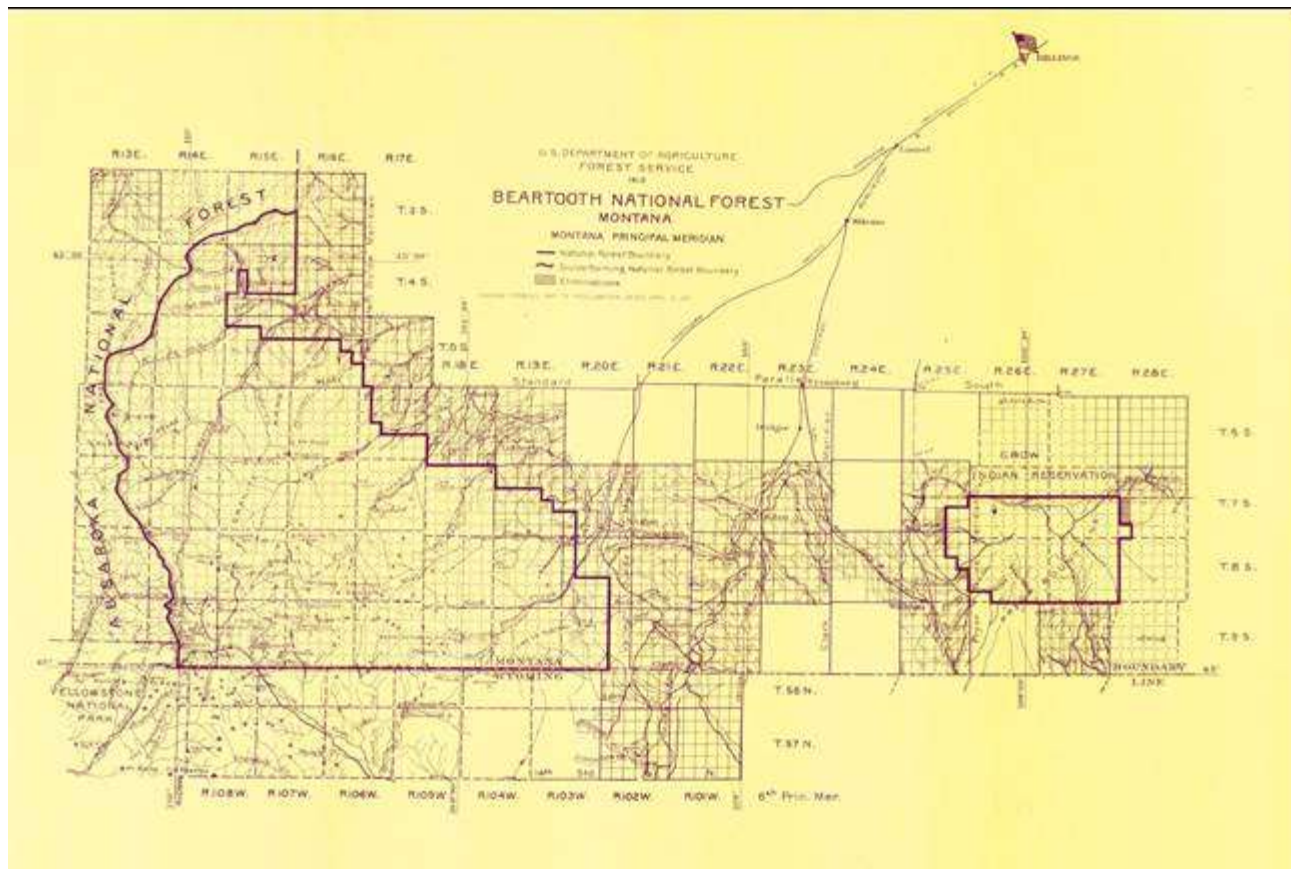


Figure 6. Forest Service map of the Beartooth National Forest, 1912, depicting the forest boundaries with the discontinuous Pryor Mountains boundary located to the east (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

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Early Development of the Rock Creek Ranger Station (1906-1923)

From an early date the necessity of permanent improvements on the national forests were discussed. Henry Graves was appointed Chief Forester in 1910 and issued three aims: facilitating 1) forest protection from fire, 2) administration of the business of the forest, and 3) development of the forest's resources. These three categories served to set priorities for the various projects in each forest's permanent improvements plans (USDA 1911). These categories mimicked certain language in the Transfer Act, which charged the secretary of agriculture with the "protection, administration, improvement, and extension" of the national forests. Improvements relating to forest protection received first priority. Administrative buildings received second priority. Graves recognized that quarters were essential for the efficient transaction of business, safeguarding government property, and public convenience. However, construction of new ranger stations was permissible only where no other accommodations were available.²⁶

A memorandum written by the Forest Supervisor in March 1931 indicates that in 1906, the Secretary of the Interior withdrew 160 acres of land within the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 6, T8S, R20E to create a ranger station for the Rock Creek Ranger District.²⁷ This withdrawal was subsequently revoked in 1911, and in 1914, a new area—comprised of the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 6, T8S, R20E—was set aside. It is clear that development occurred at this site prior to the 1914 withdrawal, however, the memorandum notes that the station had served as the district headquarters since 1908. Additionally, a ranger station is depicted to the north of the West Fork of Rock Creek on a 1912 Forest Service map of the Beartooth National Forest (see Figure 4).

The 1931 memorandum further notes that original improvements at the headquarters included a one-room log cabin, a log barn, a shed, an "earth" root cellar, and a "pole shop". The memorandum describes the cabin as being 22 feet long by 14 feet wide with a rock and concrete foundation, two chimneys, and an "almost flat" shingle roof. The barn was described as a 24-foot long by 16-foot wide wood frame building with hipped roof and wooden clapboard siding. The building lacked a formal foundation, with the corners supported by rock. The interior of the barn contained three one-horse stalls, a granary, and a hay-loft.²⁸ Descriptions of the shed, root cellar, and pole shop were not provided.

The earliest photograph of the ranger station, on file at the Custer-Gallatin National Forest Billings Office, shows an L-shaped residence, barn, and outhouse at the property, all of log or wood frame construction (Figure 7). Although this photograph was purportedly taken in 1906, the L-shaped addition on the cabin suggests that it post-dates 1911, when a 22-foot long by 16-

²⁶ For a detailed history of Region 1, please see Janene Caywood, *Flathead National Forest Backcountry Administrative Facilities National Register Nomination*, listed 12/17/2014, NR# 14001047.

²⁷ USDA Forest Service, *Improvement – Beartooth Ranger Station Plans Rock Creek Ranger Station*, 1931, on file at the CGNF Office, Billings, MT.

²⁸ USDA Forest Service, *Improvement – Beartooth Ranger Station Plans Rock Creek Ranger Station*, 1931, on file at the CGNF Office, Billings, MT.

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foot wide “office” was added to the building.²⁹ The photograph also shows a flagpole with an adjacent hitching post east of the L-shaped cabin, a circular corral to the northwest of the barn, and a split rail fence along the western property boundary. As these improvements are not noted on the 1931 memorandum, they were likely added to the ranger station after its initial development.



Figure 7. Rock Creek Ranger Station, ca. 1911, showing the L-shaped cabin with office addition (visible at left), barn (visible at right), and outhouse (visible near center) [Image on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Office, Red Lodge].

By 1913, the site expanded to include a “tool house” and several fencelines.³⁰ A second historical photograph of the ranger station property shows two side-gabled log buildings to the northeast of the barn and corral (Figure 8). Although the date of the photograph is unknown, one of these buildings is likely the tool house. The function of the second building is unknown. The photograph also indicates that the outhouse had been reoriented so that its entry faced north or south rather than west, and that additional split rail and post-and-wire fencing had been added north of the barn and tool house and west of the hitching post and flagpole. By 1914, the improved facility was described in a Forest Service report as “having the largest amount of work” of the administrative facilities within the Forest, requiring “considerable pasture” in the summer months for forest officers’ horses.³¹

²⁹ Vicky MacLean, *Home on the Range Montana’s Eastside Ranger Stations*, Vicky MacLean, 2013, p. 43.

³⁰ Vicky MacLean, *Home on the Range Montana’s Eastside Ranger Stations*, Vicky MacLean, 2013, p. 43.

³¹ Vicky MacLean, *Home on the Range Montana’s Eastside Ranger Stations*, Vicky MacLean, 2013, p. 43.

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Figure 8. Rock Creek Ranger Station, ca. 1913–1919, showing the tool house (bottom center), reoriented outhouse, and additional fencelines (Image on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Office, Red Lodge).

Information on file at the National Archives further suggests that a new 18-foot long by 14-foot wide log barn and a garage building were built on the property in the late 1910s.³² Construction of a new barn conflicts with the Forest Supervisor's memorandum, however, which states that the original barn was still present on the property—albeit it at a different location—at the time the memorandum was written.

Further improvements were made to the complex in the 1920s. In 1923, the original outhouse and earth root cellar were razed and replaced, and in 1925, a new log dwelling (known today as the “Main Cabin”) was constructed. The newly-constructed outhouse measured 6 feet long by 6 feet wide and had a shingle roof, concrete-lined pit, and automatic lids.³³ The cellar was constructed entirely of concrete and measured 10 feet long by 10 feet wide.³⁴ Two years after the dwelling was completed, a coal house was added to the complex. Similar to the other buildings at the site, the 20-foot long by 14-foot wide coal house was of log construction and had a concrete foundation and shingle roof. A historic photograph of the ranger station complex dating to 1927 shows many of these improvements (see Figure 5).

³² Vicky MacLean, *Home on the Range Montana's Eastside Ranger Stations*, Vicky MacLean, 2013, p. 43.

³³ USDA Forest Service, *Improvement – Beartooth Ranger Station Plans Rock Creek Ranger Station*, 1931, on file at the CGNF Office, Billings, MT.

³⁴ USDA Forest Service, *Improvement – Beartooth Ranger Station Plans Rock Creek Ranger Station*, 1931, on file at the CGNF Office, Billings, MT.

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Modifications were also made to existing buildings and structures within the complex between 1923 and 1929. The 1931 memorandum states the barn was moved to a new location in 1925, and the interior of the L-shaped log cabin was remodeled in 1927 and again in 1929. The first renovation involved subdividing the 1911 single room addition into two rooms. The largest room was sealed with sheetrock for use as an office, and the smaller space functioned as a storeroom. In 1929, the walls of the original one-room cabin were lined with sheetrock.³⁵

With the exception of the coal house, all of the 1920s buildings and structures are shown on an improvement plan map for the Rock Creek Ranger Station, drafted on April 25, 1931 as an accompaniment to the Forest Supervisor's memorandum. The nucleus of the headquarters area—the 1925 Main Cabin—is depicted on the map in its current location at the western end of the complex, with all other buildings and structures located to the northeast and southeast along a circular road (Figure 9). South of the dwelling, the road branched and continued south, eventually crossing a bridge over the West Fork of Rock Creek. A “rock fence” is depicted around the north, south, and west sides of the cabin and two concrete walkways extend from the main entrance and enclosed porch to openings within the wall. An additional concrete walk leads from the enclosed porch southeast to a “wood shed.” The age of the woodshed is unknown, although it is possible that this building formerly served as the coal house, erected in 1927 and not depicted on the map. A septic tank, cesspool, and flag pole are located in the lawn north of the dwelling and a fire ring sits to the east. The relocated barn is shown as being northeast of the L-shaped cabin, which is identified as a bunkhouse and office, and the garage is depicted southwest of the barn and northeast of the cabin. A circular corral is present north of the barn, and the outhouse and the cellar are shown as being located southeast and north of the garage, respectively (see Figure 9). A secondary dirt road leading to “Morrow Ranch” connected with the circular access road east of the latrine.

³⁵ USDA Forest Service, *Improvement – Beartooth Ranger Station Plans Rock Creek Ranger Station, 1931*, on file at the CGNF Office, Billings, MT.

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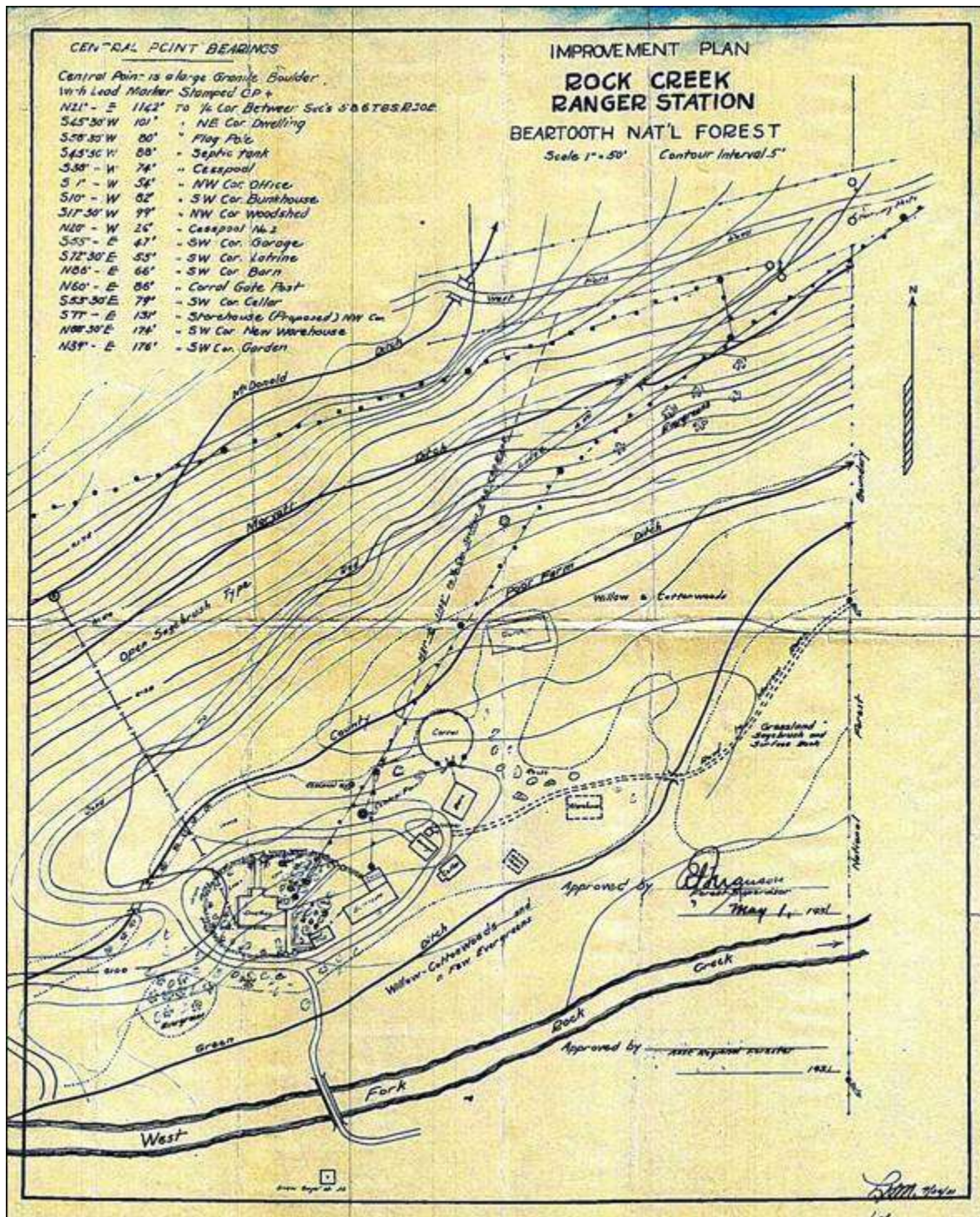


Figure 9. Improvement plan for the Rock Creek Ranger Station drafted by "L.K.M." on April 25, 1931 and approved by Forest Supervisor R.T. Ferguson on May 1, 1931 (Image on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Office, Red Lodge).

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The 1931 improvement plan also shows four generally northeast-to-southwest trending irrigation ditches, three which fall within the boundaries of the Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District: the Maryott Ditch, Green Ditch, and County Poor Farm Ditch. The earliest of these ditches—the Maryott and McDonald (which lies outside the district boundary) ditches—date to 1887, and the County Poor Farm Ditch was built in 1916–1917. The Green Ditch, presently referred to as the West Fork Irrigation Company Canal, dates to 1893.

Completion of the improvements to the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex also coincided with increasing efforts by Red Lodge citizens and Chamber of Commerce members and Carbon County Commissioners to raise money and solicit Forest Service cooperation for the construction of a road that would branch off the proposed Red Lodge to Cooke City Road (the present Beartooth Highway/United States Highway 212) extending through the West Fork of Rock Creek drainage. Construction of a road was seen as a draw for tourists and outdoor recreationists, as well as a way to open up timber land and provide better access to more easily fight forest fires. The road, which lies immediately north of the Rock Creek Ranger Station and known today as the West Fork of Rock Creek Road, was built by McManus and Company of Chicago, Illinois; it ended up as a roughly 10 mile stretch, from Red Lodge to near Cascade Creek, falling short of the original proposal.

On February 17, 1932, President Herbert Hoover issued Executive Order (EO) 5800 which consolidated the majority of the lands within the Gallatin and Beartooth National Forests in Montana with those of Absaroka National Forest. This transfer included the southwestern portion of the Beartooth range near Cooke City. That same day, he issued EO 5801 which transferred lands from the Montana and South Dakota portions of the Absaroka and Beartooth National Forests—including the Pryors, eastern Beartooth Plateau, and the West Fork of Rock Creek drainage—to the Custer National Forest.³⁶ These consolidations significantly increased the Custer National Forest's size, and were the impetus for the relocation of the Forest Supervisor's office from Miles City to Billings in 1932.³⁷

As part of the 1932 consolidation, management of the majority of the Beartooth National Forest lands within the Custer National Forest fell under the previously-established management area called the Beartooth Division.³⁸ The Beartooth Division remained divided into three districts: the Stillwater, Rock Creek, and Pryor Mountain Districts. In 1933, there were nine ranger stations located in the Beartooth Division of the Custer National Forest, or one for Pryor

³⁶ Robert D. Baker, Larry Burt, Robert S. Maxwell, Victor H. Treat, and Henry C. Dethloff, *The National Forests of the Northern Region Living Legacy* (College Station: Intaglio, Inc., 1993), found at <http://foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/1/history/contents.htm>, retrieved April 7, 2016. .

³⁷ Wilson F. Clark, *Custer National Forest Lands: A Brief History*. Billings: Custer National Forest, 1982.

³⁸ William L. Evans, Forest Supervisor, Memorandum to Regional Forester, "a short descriptive article on National Forest Lands and activities in Carbon County to be included in the Water Resources Survey Report for Carbon County" (October 1965), on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

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Mountain District, three within Stillwater District, and five within the Rock Creek District.³⁹
The Rock Creek Ranger Station served as the headquarters of the Rock Creek District which grew to incorporate the Pryor Mountain District in 1943.⁴⁰

Use of the Rock Creek Ranger Station by the CCC

The association between the Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, is almost inseparable. The Forest Service greatly benefitted from a number of New Deal programs in the 1930s, all aimed at helping revitalize the downtrodden economy through deficit spending on unemployment relief to stimulate consumer demand. Also available to the Forest Service were funds from the Emergency Relief Act, the Emergency Highways Act, the Work Projects Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act, and numerous other sources. Lasting from 1933 to 1942, the CCC bracketed the New Deal era for the Forest Service.

In 1933, the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex was used as a spike camp (a temporary or secondary camp) for the Rock Creek Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp F-11 located on the Main Fork of Rock Creek southwest of Red Lodge. A second camp, known as Camp Nelson, was also established along the West Fork of Rock Creek roughly eight miles east of the Rock Creek Ranger Station. While the CCC enrollees stationed at Camp Nelson worked on various project including road construction and post and pole production, the camp at the ranger station primarily operated a creosote treatment plant which they erected on the property. The treatment plant operated seven days a week by a rotating crew of seven CCC enrollees, all of whom resided at the spike camp. According to Brownell, in one month, more than 1,500 fence posts, three sets of timber for cattle guards, and 300 telephone stubs had been treated at the plant.⁴¹ The plant appears to have operated for only a short period of time as records post-dating 1933 have not been located. Evidence of the location of the plant has not been identified in the district.

Development of the Rock Creek Ranger Station post-CCC

The years following the CCC's occupation of the property lack good documentation. Forest Service correspondence describing changes to the facilities after the mid-1930s were not located, nor were historical maps showing the locations of post-1931 buildings and structures. A series of photographs on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Office in Red Lodge and a 1978 Forest Service "Inventory of Real Property" for the Rock Creek Ranger Station property provide the only evidence of changes made within the district between 1936 and 1971.

³⁹ Custer National Forest Beartooth Division Montana Principal Meridian, Montana map 1933, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Billings Office, Billings.

⁴⁰ *History of the Beartooth Ranger District*,
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/custergallatin/recreation/?cid=stelprd3832460>, accessed May 21, 2015.

⁴¹ Joan L. Brownell, *Civilian Conservation Corps, Beartooth Ranger District*. Billings, MT: Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, 2002, p. 53.

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The photographs that date to 1936 suggest three new buildings were added to the district by this time. Interestingly, the 1978 inventory states that all three of these buildings date to 1938–1939, suggesting that either the build dates on the inventory forms are incorrect or the handwritten dates on the bottom of the photographs are inaccurate. Regardless, the photographs and inventory confirm that extensive improvements were made within the headquarters area of the district in the mid-to-latter half of the 1930s.

One of these buildings is shown in an overview photograph of the property as located along the circular drive east of the original L-shaped log cabin and garage (see Figure 2). The area presently occupied by the two stall garage (see Photograph 5.

MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD), is labeled as a “barn” on the 1931 improvement plan. The memorandum accompanying the 1931 plan notes that “the minimum amount of effort has been expended on this barn because it is planned, when funds are available, to replace this building with a new log structure.” It further describes the barn as a wood frame, hipped roof building with no foundation. As this description does not conform to the architectural style of the building in the photograph, it is presumed that the two stall garage was constructed on site after the original barn was razed and reconstructed.

There is also a picture of the current log barn in a different location than what is depicted on the map (see Figure 1). It is likely that this building represents the new log barn built on the site to replace the original 1908 barn. If so, this picture suggests that the old barn was razed sometime between 1931 and 1936, with the new barn built in its current location after that time.

The storehouse/fire cache constructed of logs with a front-gable roof, appears to have been added to the property around 1936 (Figure 10). The 1931 improvement plan map shows two buildings planned for construction near the building’s current location. One of these buildings is identified as a “storehouse” and the second as a “warehouse.” Its size and proximity to the bridge crossing the West Fork Ditch Company Canal, suggests the building served as the former warehouse. If correct, the building appears to have been relocated from another district rather than constructed on site based on the memorandum accompanying the plan: “Since the office is no longer required at D-2 (this district having been combined with D-1) it is proposed to move the structure to D-1 and use it as a warehouse” (likely the proposed warehouse that appears on the 1931 plan map). It further describes the warehouse as being built in the “Plan C-2” style, which the current building conforms to. This suggests that the 1936 date corresponds to the date the building was relocated rather than its date of construction.

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Figure 10. Possible former warehouse building (now the storehouse/fire cache [Building #2301] within the Rock Creek Ranger Station complex, ca. 1936 (Image courtesy of CGNF Billings Office).

By the 1950s, the Rock Creek Ranger District encompassed the entire southern half of the Beartooth lands under Custer National Forest management and the Rock Creek Ranger Station continued to serve as the district's administrative center. As the 1950s progressed, however, the inadequacies of the historic complex became increasingly apparent to Custer National Forest administrators. Access to the site was problematic during difficult winters, and the facility became largely a seasonal work base, with the ranger living in town and wintering at the rented office there. This arrangement became increasingly inadequate over time, as the ranger district's year-round workload increased. The dilemma was finally resolved in 1962, when the Forest Service constructed a new ranger station complex at the end of Red Lodge along U.S. Highway 212 and the administrative complex at Rock Creek became a summer-only "work center."

The Modern Years (1962–present)

On January 1, 1966, the administrative structure of the Custer National Forest's Beartooth lands underwent a change when the Stillwater Ranger District (headquartered in the village of Nye, Montana) was consolidated with the Rock Creek Ranger District.⁴² The combined unit, renamed the Beartooth Ranger District, was based at the newly-established administrative facility in Red Lodge.

In 1971, the Forest Service published an engineering report for the former administrative facility, now work center, which provided a brief description of buildings and structures situated within

⁴² "Custer Forest Expanding, Merging," *Billings Gazette*, December 9, 1965.

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the property. The report described the complex as consisting of “one bunkhouse used only in the summer for seasonal help, one pit toilet, a corral for keeping a maximum of 10 horses, and four other buildings used for storage of bulk materials.”⁴³ It further noted that the property was “encircled by two irrigation ditches whose points of diversion lie upstream,” and included a sketch map depicting the infrastructure mentioned in the report (Figure 11).

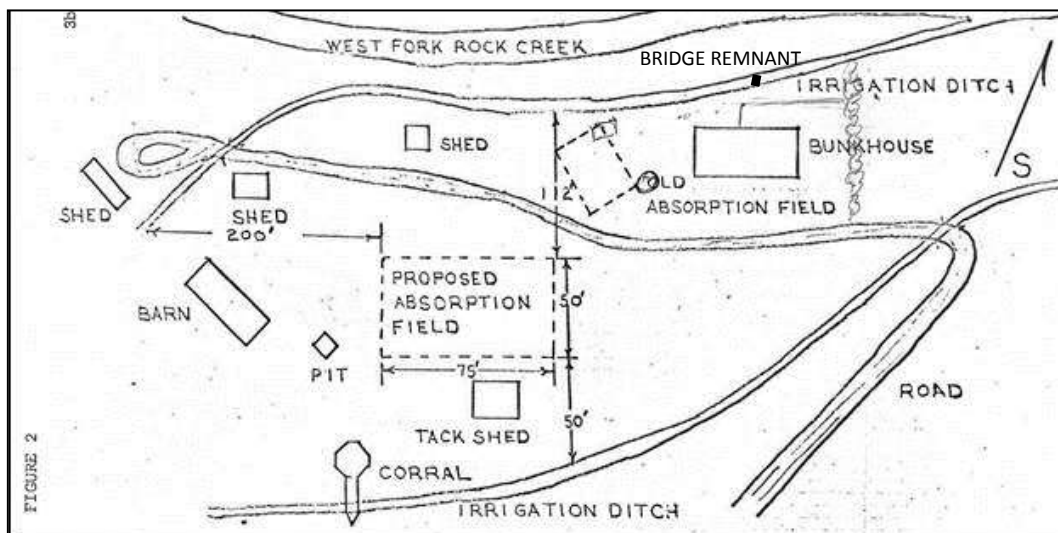


Figure 11. 1971 sketch map of the Rock Creek Work Center, showing buildings and structures within the headquarters area. Note the road does not extend to the maintenance yard at the time this map was drafted (Image on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Office, Red Lodge).

Based on the descriptions provided on the map, the four storage buildings likely represent the two-stall garage (Building #2200), the multi-stall garage (Building #2302), the storehouse/fire cache building (Building #2301), and the tack shed (Building #2308), all which remain on the property today. The map also shows the Main Cabin (Building #1010) and barn (Building #2401) in their present locations. The current locations of the “tack shed” and the corral suggest that both of these facilities were subsequently relocated sometime after the map was produced. In the case of the corral, the report noted that its current location adjacent to the County Poor Farm Ditch, was unsanitary and contributing to contamination of its water supply—an observation that likely prompted its relocation to the southeast of the barn sometime after 1971. The map also suggests that pit toilet was razed following publication of the report. The author noted that at the time of the site visit, the pit toilet was filled with water and recommended that the structure be replaced with a vault toilet.

Subsequent inventories of resources at the former Rock Creek Ranger Station, nee Rock Creek Work Center, including the maintenance area west of the general building complex, occurred in

⁴³ Jim McGill, *Engineering Report for Rock Creek Work Center Near Red Lodge, Montana*, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Region 1, 1971.

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1978 and 1983.⁴⁴ Of the seven locations listed on the form (e.g., Red Lodge, Meyers Creek, Crooked Creek, Sage Creek, Line Creek, Rock Creek, and Big Park), the administrative complex at Rock Creek had the most buildings, or 38 percent of the total number of properties within the ranger district.⁴⁵

The September 1983 inventory, part of a broader inventory of Region 1 administrative facilities, noted that the site was occupied by two Forest Service personnel for three months out of the year. A total of eight buildings were recorded at the site during the inventory, six located within the district area (the other two were located in the maintenance area to the west, outside the district). Buildings within the headquarters area included a 1,000 square foot log bunkhouse with a cellar and enclosed porch (Building #1010); a 460 square foot wood frame two-car garage (Building #2200; now a sign shop), a 209 square foot log storehouse (Building #2301; now a fire cache/propane storage), a 5-stall wood frame warehouse building measuring 1,440 square feet (Building #2302), a 216 square foot log tack house (Building #2308); and a log barn measuring 480 square feet (Building #2401). Nearly all of the buildings, including the “bunkhouse” (or Main Cabin), listed a construction year of 1938. The only exception was the tack house, which indicated a build date of 1969.⁴⁶

Lands within the Custer National Forest continued to be consolidated, with the management areas formerly classified as “divisions” reorganized into “districts.” By 1988, the forest consisted of just three management districts, the Beartooth, Sioux, and Ashland Ranger Districts. In 2014, the Custer National Forest and Gallatin National Forest (which possessed the lands of the former Absaroka Forest) were consolidated into the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Today, this forest encompasses 3.1 million acres of land and stretches across seven ranger districts in southeastern Montana and northwestern South Dakota.⁴⁷

The Rock Creek Ranger Station—Day-to-day Activities

Information gleaned from several issues of *The Beartooth Forester* newsletter (191-13) and a 1911-12 manuscript entitled *The BEARTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST – Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation To The Public* provides a glimpse as to the early-day activities at the Rock Creek Ranger Station and duties of the rangers on this district (District 1, Rock Creek and Line Creek).

⁴⁴ USDA Forest Service, *Inventory of Real Property, Beartooth District*, 1978, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT; USDA Forest Service, *Northern (01) Region Facility Management System Site Inventory Report – Verification Report 200, Rock Creek Work Center*, 1983, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT.

⁴⁵ USDA Forest Service, *Inventory of Real Property, Beartooth District*, 1978, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT.

⁴⁶ USDA Forest Service, *Northern (01) Region Facility Management System Site Inventory Report – Verification Report 200, Rock Creek Work Center*, 1983, on file at the Beartooth Ranger District Headquarters, Red Lodge, MT.

⁴⁷ USDA Forest Service, *Custer Gallatin Family Tree*, on file at Beartooth Ranger District Office, Red Lodge, MT, n.d.

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Still in its infancy as a Federal Agency during the early 1900s, the Forest Service was experimenting with different ways to manage the enormous quantity and varied character of lands under its jurisdiction. On the Beartooth National Forest several challenges existed, each with its own measure of importance, facing each District Ranger and their staff. On the Rock Creek District (#1)—which included the Line Creek Area, Main Rock Creek drainage, and the West Fork Rock Creek—Rangers were responsible for issuing Free Use Permits to local individuals who needed affordable sources of green logs for the construction of cabins and barns and other outbuildings, fence posts, and poles for fence rails.⁴⁸ The Main Rock Creek and West Fork of Rock Creek areas had primitive wagon roads that coursed a few miles up the bottom of the drainages, and these travel corridors provided limited access.

Rangers were responsible for evaluating potentials for timber stands and defining boundaries that could then be offered to commercial loggers and small sawmill operators. Much of this timber product was destined to become support props for the booming mining operations in nearby Bearcreek, Bridger, and Red Lodge.⁴⁹ The Rangers were constantly monitoring the progress of active timber sale operations—including scaling log decks, burning brush piles, and policing the cleanliness of the operations and of the logger's camps.⁵⁰ Both large and small timber sales were routinely being planned and offered.⁵¹ A few of the larger timber sale areas on the Rock Creek District were located in Blacktail Gulch, Dutch Creek, Lake Fork, Silver Run, and Willow Creek. One enterprising individual utilized the high waters of the Lake Fork Creek to transport logs closer to market.⁵²

Occasionally, Rangers were occupied with tracking down and fining violators who were illegally removing forest products for personal use or for profit.⁵³

Another task overseen by the Ranger was the collecting of lodgepole pine cones for seeds, which were either planted on the forest, such as in the Dutch Creek drainage, or distributed to other forests for planting.⁵⁴ The Silver Run area was a favored cone collecting location on the Rock Creek District. Hundreds of pounds of cones were often dropped off at the Rock Creek Ranger Station and, in fact, in 1911 the construction of a seed extracting plant was proposed at the

⁴⁸ *The Beartooth Forester*, February 1912: pp. 2, 8-9; USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, pp. 5-6, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

⁴⁹ USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, p. 5, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

⁵⁰ *The Beartooth Forester*, June 1911, p. 6; *The Beartooth Forester*, February 1912, p. 4; *The Beartooth Forester*, June 1912, p. 11.

⁵¹ *The Beartooth Forester*, July 1911, p. 7.

⁵² *The Beartooth Forester*, June 1911, p. 6.

⁵³ *The Beartooth Forester*, April 1911, p. 11.

⁵⁴ *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1911, pp. 11-13.

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station.⁵⁵ In 1911, Mr. George G. Hedgcock, Plant Pathologist of the Department of Agriculture, collected specimens of Red Belt disease on the Rock Creek District.⁵⁶

The review and issuance of grazing permits was another duty of the Ranger. Sheep grazing areas were primarily confined to the high-elevation plateau landscapes since these areas were better suited, in terms of ease of access and the ability of the sheep to utilize the feed. Horses and cattle grazing was confined to the lower foothills and drainage bottoms.⁵⁷ Grazing applications were reviewed early in the year and decisions were made as to which ones to approve or not approve.⁵⁸ The issuance of grazing permits necessitated a knowledge of the grazing areas. Rangers spent a considerable amount of time, on foot and on horseback, inspecting the conditions of grazing areas to set the proper times for turnout and removal to insure overgrazing would not occur. Locations of poisonous plant infestations—such as death camas, larkspur, loco, and wild parsnip—were identified and pointed out to permittees. Two camas infestations that took the lives of a small number of sheep were located on Silver Run Plateau and in Willow Creek on the Rock Creek District.⁵⁹

In 1912, Assistant Forest Ranger George A. Perry reported helping permittees haze sheep and cattle and building a barbed-wire counting pen at the Line Creek Station.⁶⁰ Throughout the season rangers would visit the grazing areas and conduct inspections of animal counts, forage conditions, camp locations, and any other issues of concern including investigating grazing trespass cases.⁶¹ During the early 1900s, it was estimated that 50,000 sheep and 5,000 cattle were permitted on the Beartooth National Forest.⁶² On the Rock Creek District alone in 1913 there were 362 head of cattle, 67 head of horses, and 12,092 sheep.⁶³ Interestingly, in 1912, a Special Use Permit was issued to collect hay along the Main Rock Creek, but it is unknown if this was cultivated hay or native grass.⁶⁴

One of the most important reasons for the development of road and trail networks on the forest during the early 1900s was to provide a means of access for back-country firefighters and equipment-laden pack animals.⁶⁵ While Rangers usually supervised crews involved with trail construction and repair, there were times when Rangers found themselves helping to build or

⁵⁵ *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1911, pp. 11-13.

⁵⁶ *The Beartooth Forester*, March, 1911, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁷ USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, p. 10, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

⁵⁸ *The Beartooth Forester*, March 1911, p. 11-12.

⁵⁹ *The Beartooth Forester*, July-August 1912, p. 8.

⁶⁰ *The Beartooth Forester*, September-October 1912, pp. 13-14.

⁶¹ *The Beartooth Forester*, September-October 1912, pp. 11, 14.

⁶² USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, pp. 7-8, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT.

⁶³ *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1913, p. 3.

⁶⁴ *The Beartooth Forester*, July-August 1912, p. 8.

⁶⁵ USDA Forest Service, *The Beartooth National Forest: Its Resources, and Its Value and Relation to the Public*, 1912, p. 17, on file at the Custer Gallatin National Forest Office, Billings, MT. 17.

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brush trails.⁶⁶ In 1911 Forest Guard Richard P. Schulze, stationed at the Line Creek Ranger Station on the Rock Creek District, built a new trail up the gulch behind the station to the plateau in addition to working on other trails and watching for fires.⁶⁷ Two years later, in 1913, Forest Guard Arthur M. Baum, who was stationed at the Line Creek Ranger Station on the Rock Creek District, spent a considerable amount of time mining rock and clearing brush from the face of the mountain trail and from the station to the plateau trail.⁶⁸

Seasonally hired men, devoted strictly to fire patrol, were distributed across the forest. The Rock Creek District had a force of four men in 1911.⁶⁹ In 1912 Assistant Forest Ranger George A. Perry, stationed on the Rock Creek District, appointed several people as per-diem guards for fire protection.⁷⁰ These people were supervised by the District Ranger and were furnished with fire tools and other equipment. Fire caches were placed at strategic locations across the forest.⁷¹ Rangers were constantly inspecting their Districts during fire season and, if needed, posting fire notices and warnings.⁷²

All rangers were encouraged to mark their trails and the names of creek crossings, not only to benefit the public who used the trails but also for new employees who might be unfamiliar with the backcountry.⁷³ Without doubt, these trails served other interests such as stock driveways, prospecting, timber sale administration, recreation and even access to backcountry lakes for fish planting activities.

Although large-scale mining on the Beartooth National Forest would not be realized until the 1940s, prospecting and small mining operations were common in the Rock Creek District. In 1911, prospect activities in the Ingles Gulch area were inspected by Ranger D. D. Johnson.⁷⁴ A local individual, M. E. Martin, reported promising prospects of quartz and copper on Main Rock Creek.⁷⁵

The duties of Rangers at their respective stations was just as varied as it was out on their Districts. Of major importance was keeping current with the filling out of multitudes of Forest Service forms and maintaining records. An intimate knowledge of their District was expected of each Ranger—accomplished by frequent tours for the purpose of examination, exploration, and inspection—but this knowledge needed to be readily shared with others. Rangers were required

⁶⁶ *The Beartooth Forester*, September-October 1912, p. 14; *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1913, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁷ *The Beartooth Forester*, July 1911, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁸ *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1913, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *The Beartooth Forester*, May 1911, pp. 1-4.

⁷⁰ *The Beartooth Forester*, March 1912, p. 17.

⁷¹ *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1913, p. 2.

⁷² *The Beartooth Forester*, June 1912, p. 11.

⁷³ *The Beartooth Forester*, March 1911, p. 7; *The Beartooth Forester*, February 1912, p. 16; *The Beartooth Forester*, September-October 1912, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *The Beartooth Forester*, July 1911, p. 8.

⁷⁵ *The Beartooth Forester*, February 1912, pp. 2-3.

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to construct maps of their District to acquaint the public, and familiarize new employees and seasonal staff, with particular areas of the Forest.⁷⁶

Physical labor activities were a norm for the Rangers, both out on the District and back at the Station. A few of the varied activities Rangers were involved with at the Rock Creek Station during the early 1900s included helping install telephone lines, installing interior floors, repairing cracks in logs, replacing a wood stove with a coal stove, building a log storehouse, building a stone root-house, building a bridge across Rock Creek.⁷⁷

Architectural Trends Adopted by the Forest Service (1897–1942)

The following section was derived from *Evaluation of Region 1 Forest Service-Owned Buildings for Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places: Volume 1*, prepared for the Ashland Ranger District of the Custer Gallatin National Forest (then Custer National Forest) by Janene Caywood, James McDonald, and Theodore Catton of Historical Research Associates, Inc. (HRA) in 1991. This report includes historical contexts that trace the development of the Forest Service and its “permanent improvement program” and identifies major architectural trends for historic buildings located within Region 1.

Between 1897 and 1918, Forest Service rangers—the same people responsible for building trails and guarding the forest against fire—designed and built most of the permanent improvements in Region 1. In some instances, the sites selected for administrative withdrawals already contained improvements that had been built and abandoned by failed homesteaders and miners.

The Forest Service buildings built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century fit the definition of “vernacular” as defined by James Deetz:

...folk building, done without benefit of formal plans. Such structures are frequently built by their occupants or, if not, by someone who is well within the occupant’s immediate community. Vernacular structures are the person’s inner feelings, their ideas of what is or is not suitable to them.⁷⁸

Buildings were utilitarian in character, due to the need to provide for varying uses, sometimes within the same building. For example, at most early administrative sites, the living quarters and office space occupied the same building. In the 1905 edition of the *Use Book* it was stated that:

Eventually all the Rangers who serve year round will be furnished with headquarter cabins on the Reserves. It is in the intention of the Forest Service to build these as rapidly as funds will permit. Whenever possible, cabins should be built of logs with shingle or shake roofs.

⁷⁶ *The Beartooth Forester*, March 1911, p. 7; *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1911, p. 2; *The Beartooth Forester*, February 1912, p. 16; *The Beartooth Forester* September-October 1912, p. 2.

⁷⁷ *The Beartooth Forester*, March 1911, p. 7; *The Beartooth Forester*, February 1912, pp. 4-6; *The Beartooth Forester*, January 1913, p. 2; *The Beartooth Forester*, April 1913, p. 2.

⁷⁸ James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*, (New York: Doubleday, 1977), p. 93.

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The hardware, glass, and door and window frames may be purchased on authorization from the Forester. Cabins should be sufficient size to afford comfortable living accommodations to the family of the Ranger stationed in them and this Ranger will be held responsible for the proper care of the cabin and the ground surrounding it.⁷⁹

The variation in workmanship, materials, and design exhibited among these early buildings reflects the skills of the individual builder, rather than the agency's standards and designs. Following guidelines such as those published in the 1906 *Use Book*, early Forest Rangers typically built their office/homes with log walls, stone foundations, and wood shingles or possibly shakes hand split at the site for the roof. The Forest Service left design elements such as the number of stories, the floor plan and the roof style, to the rangers who appear to have employed the skills and styles with which they felt most comfortable.

Since Rangers were "unofficially" expected to complete much of this work during off-duty hours, the quality of construction of the earliest buildings varies.⁸⁰ Apparently, rangers had an unrestricted role in deciding the layout of the buildings at early stations. Consequently, the atmosphere of these early stations is similar to that of contemporary homesteads.

Few administrative sites remain that are representative of the early phase of development, as many were redeveloped following World War I (WWI). Additionally, it appears that the Forest Service destroyed a large number of the remaining stations constructed during this time period in the 1950s and 1960s, when "excess" buildings were sold and destroyed.

After the end of WWI, the Forest Service resumed the task of establishing new improvements, primarily at previously existing administrative properties. The Forest Service was more visible than ever before, and it needed improvements which were usable, easy to maintain and acceptable to the public. Over the next 25 years, the Forest Service adopted increasingly strict procedures regarding the permanent improvements constructed in the Region.

The period between 1918 and 1928 is unremarkable in terms of the numbers of buildings constructed within the Region, partly due to the Forest Service's continuing problem with securing funds for buildings. Although Forest Service employees continued to construct many of the buildings that did receive funding, the choice of building design and building placement was reviewed at a higher level, usually at least by the Forest Supervisor. A wider variety of buildings materials appear to have been acceptable and architectural designs reflect those common at the local and regional level. In this sense, the Forest Service simply continued with the same principle which had guided its earliest construction or the notion that it is best to blend in with the local culture.

During the 1920s, materials and designs selected for specific sites appear to depend in part upon the location of the property and availability of materials. Administrative properties located in

⁷⁹ USDA Forest Service, *The Use of the National Forest Reserves: Regulations and Instructions* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), p. 108.

⁸⁰ It is evident from reviewing the administrative site improvement plans from the 1920s and 1930s that many of the early buildings were not well-constructed, and these were the first to be replaced during the rebuilding era which followed World War I.

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areas accessible to supply points tend to contain frame buildings rather than log buildings. These wood frame buildings are similar in most respects to the buildings that would have been found in the nearby towns and cities. The most common style of frame building from the 1920s and into the 1930s is the Bungalow style building with "Craftsman" detailing. These buildings are commonly rectangular in plan, with a gable roof and exposed rafter ends, roof braces or brackets, and droplap or shingle exterior siding. Both double hung and hopper style windows are commonly found with both styles often used on the same building.

It is possible that the Forest Service designed Bungalow style buildings specifically for a particular site (although no architectural plans or drawings were located for these types of buildings) or that they represent "pattern book plans" common during the 1920s. In either case, the materials used in construction and finishing were those available to the general population.

In more remote areas, log construction continued to predominate. These log buildings also possess elements of "Craftsman" detailing, including exposed rafter ends and roof braces and/or brackets, and dormers. Most log buildings constructed during the 1920s have rectangular floor plans with gable roofs, and either an open shed roof porch along the long axis of the building or a continuous gable roof porch. The Main Cabin found at the Rock Creek Ranger Station reflects this style quite well displaying several Craftsman accents.

The notching method selected appears to be a function of the skills of the builder, and placement of the entry to be a function of the size of the building. In small buildings, the door is offset to the side to allow for optimal use of interior wall space. The larger buildings tend to have centrally placed entries. Most of the buildings constructed according to this plan have multi-pane sliding windows; however, a few hopper and awning windows were observed in buildings of this type.

A wood frame version of the one room dwelling was also used, but it appears to post-date, by 8 to 10 years, the first use of log buildings of this style. Usually buildings of this type are found at smaller administrative properties which were developed for intermittent use by the Forest Service in remote areas. Also, several occur at fire lookouts for use as quarters for the fire guards, when the lookout building itself was unsuitable for habitation. The majority of these buildings date to the period between 1928 and 1934, although there are earlier and later representatives.

Another significant development which appears to have taken place during the late 1920s was the introduction of the technique of log "scribing" to produce very tightly fitting ventral saddle notches. Most log buildings constructed prior to the late 1920s have either square notches, "V" notches, double saddle notches or variations of the dovetail notch. However, beginning in the late 1930s, virtually all log building construction initiated by the Forest Service involved the use of a scribe, an instrument which when drawn along the interface of two logs, marks the area to be cut for the notch, which requires little daubing or chinking.⁸¹

⁸¹ Daubing and chinking are terms used to refer to the materials applied to the spaces between wall logs to seal the building. For purposes of this context, the chinking applies to materials such as paper, rags, and poles which are usually pushed or stuffed into cavities. Daubing refers to material which must be prepared and

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Another advantage of the use of the scribe method is that it requires only minimal skills with an axe to produce a high quality log building. Documents obtained from some of the forests in the Region indicate that by the late 1920s, the skills required to construct adequate log buildings were not universally possessed by the majority of Forest Service employees. Unless a forest happened to be particularly lucky in employing a competent builder, they could have trouble getting their improvements. The following excerpt from *A History of Ranger Stations and Administrative Sites on the Moose Creek Ranger District*, describes the problem:

Leroy Lewis was appointed Bear Creek District ranger in 1927...Lewis seemed to be interested in building construction and in the types of buildings used by the Forest Service. It did not set well with that the several log buildings used by the service depicted no "particular regional standard of construction." He used the term "Selway wood butchers" to show his feelings. In 1928 Clyde Blake, "a scribe cabin expert" was detailed to the forest to train all rangers in the timber scribe method of log building constructed (undated and anonymous).⁸²

The year 1928 marks the beginning of a more formal approach to receiving Regional consistency in building design and construction. During that year, Clyde Fickes moved to the branch of operations at the Regional Office in Missoula. Although brought to Missoula to work on finalizing the design for a pre-cut lookout house, Regional administrators soon placed him in charge of all improvement work conducted by the branch of operations. Although the Region had been moving towards standardizing its permanent improvements, it was not until 1928, that this goal began to be realized.

One of the first tasks undertaken by Fickes was to begin compilation of a manual to provide instructions for building all manner of improvements, and provide acceptable building plans for rangers to consider when proposing construction of a new building. By the early 1930s, Fickes collected information on the building methods and materials needed for all types of improvements. He collected illustrations, plans, and elevations from the building that worked well in the field from a design and economic standpoint. The result was the *Improvement Handbook*, revised and reissued in 1935 under the name *Region One Handbook, Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements*.⁸³

One important section of the handbook addressed the problem of selecting and developing a building site. The handbook states:

The selection of the building site is perhaps just as important as the erection of the building according to sound construction standards. Whether the building is one of a group at ranger headquarters or stands alone at the intersection of two trails in the back country, its location must be chosen with care and considerable forethought. Sunlight,

applied to the building wet, such as mud/sand and lime/sand mixtures, tar, and cement. Both types of material may be used in one building.

⁸² This document is available the Nez Perce National Forest District 6 Office in Grangeville, Idaho.

⁸³ Clyde P. Fickes, *Region One Handbook Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements* (Missoula: USDA Forest Service, Region One, 1935).

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drainage, background, fuel, pasture, and water supply must all be considered in their proper relationship to one another...Just remember that a building once up is finally located for at least 25 years and that is must be lived with all of that time no matter how unhandily it may be located. For these reasons, it is necessary that all ranger station improvement plans be approved by the Regional Forester and that changed in the plan shall not be made except with his approval.⁸⁴

Another consideration brought out in the handbook was the need to have specific plans for particular buildings. Fickes advocated that the Region hire a trained architect—someone who understood the details of design, plan documents, and construction. In 1930, William J. Fox, newly graduated from University of Washington, became the first architect to work in Region 1's branch of operations. He worked under the direction of Fickes, and together, they formalized many of the building designs which previously had been used informally. Many of Fox's designs and renderings are included in the 1935 handbook.

Fickes' work gave each forest examples of what could possibly be used in the development of administrative sites. The handbook states:

It will be the general practice to prepare a special design and plan for each of the major buildings at each site. These plans will be prepared by the architects working in the Regional Office. The use of standard plans will be confined to such structures as barns and garages at headquarters and to structures at temporary field stations.

The construction of any building at any location will not be attempted until after the location and building plans have been approved by the Regional Forester.⁸⁵

Although there are exceptions to Fickes' standards, for the most part these stipulations were followed and the sites and buildings in the Region reflect these ideas.

With the acceleration of the building improvement program during the CCC era, there appears to have been a new emphasis on maintaining the "rustic" appearance of its administrative facilities located in remote or rural settings. Basically, the Forest Service wanted to construct buildings which accommodated the needs of the agency and its employees, yet still fit with the distinguishing components in the environment, which in this region include logs or other natural wood products such as wooden shingles. The following guidelines are found in Fickes' handbook:

The type of construction, whether log or frame, will be settled at the time the improvement plan for the site is prepared. There is quite a bit of aversion to constructing log buildings for dwellings, administrative buildings, etc. at headquarters for the reason that it is difficult construction and adds materially to the cost of the structure to satisfactorily finish the interiors. Log walls are nice in summer cabins, hunting camps, etc. but the average housekeeper has a distinct aversion to them in year long homes

⁸⁴ Clyde P. Fickes, *Region One Handbook Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements* (Missoula: USDA Forest Service, Region One, 1935).

⁸⁵ Clyde P. Fickes, *Region One Handbook Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements* (Missoula: USDA Forest Service, Region One, 1935).

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because of the extra volume of work necessary to keep them clean. It has been found that a very satisfactory substitute for log buildings insofar as appearances are concerned is secured when the exterior walls of frame structures are covered with a sawed cedar shingle surface scarified so that it resembles a split or hand-rived shake. The use of log siding is not considered desirable since buildings so finished have an artificial or counterfeit appearance. For the many minor field stations log construction should be used where suitable house logs can be secured.⁸⁶

Other researchers have used the term “Rustic” to describe the large, elaborate log buildings erected by the National Park Service (NPS) during the first decades of this century (e.g., the Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park. Merrill Ann Wilson noted that “rustic” was a function of its times.

This little noticed movement in American architecture was a natural outgrowth of a new romanticism about nature, our country’s western frontiers...The conservation ethic slowly took hold in this atmosphere of romanticism. Part of this ethic fostered the development of a unique architectural style. Perhaps for the first time in the history of American architecture, a building became an accessory to nature...Early pioneer and regional building techniques were revived because it was thought that a structure employing native materials blended best with the environment...No (other) single government agency has to date been responsible for such a revolutionary break in architectural form.⁸⁷

Whereas the NPS may have revived the use of “rustic” building techniques, the Forest Service never abandoned them. It had always been the desire of the Forest Service to accommodate local and regional standards, which in most cases involved the use of locally available materials. The utilitarian nature of the vast majority of Forest Service buildings precluded the construction of “high style” rustic buildings, such as those referred to by Wilson however the term “rustic” is appropriate for the Forest Service buildings constructed in remote or rural locations.

Alternatively, Forest Service building complexes located within towns tend to have a more formal appearance. This difference in appearance is not due to differences in the plans of the buildings but to design elements such as the selection of construction style or finishing material.

Whether rustic or formal in appearance, many of the large building complexes designed by Fox during the 1930s and 1940s, exhibit elements of the “Craftsman” or “Georgian” architectural styles. Again, due to the nature of Forest Service activities there are no “high style” examples of either of these styles, rather, specific design elements of the building will display influences from these architectural styles.

In addition to the large ranger district headquarters designed as complete units, smaller administrative sites continued to be developed a building at a time. Acceptable building plans were available from a variety of sources, and generally the District Ranger worked with his

⁸⁶ Clyde P. Fickes, *Region One Handbook Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements* (Missoula: USDA Forest Service, Region One, 1935).

⁸⁷ Merrill Ann Wilson, “Rustic Architecture: The National Park Style,” *Trends*, July-September, 1976, p. 4-5.

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Supervisor's office and the Regional Office to select a basic plan which then could be modified for use at the specific site.⁸⁸ The fact that many buildings come in frame and log varieties, indicates that the people selecting the construction style were aware of the differences between settings appropriate for rustic buildings and those appropriate for a more formal appearance.

Craftsman Style Design and the U.S. Forest Service

Originating in the western United States, the Craftsman style served as a bridge between the natural and built environment. The style reflected the surrounding environment relying heavily on materials such as wood and stone. The influence of noted architects, such as Kirtland Cutter and Robert Reamer, worked well in those areas where employing native log and stone in construction enhanced the settlement patterns. This influence worked quite well in Montana. Although the majority of the buildings at the Rock Creek Ranger Station present a more vernacular appearance, the Main Cabin, despite its log construction, displays several Craftsman style characteristics reflecting a typical design pattern employed by the Forest Service throughout the 20th century.

Summary

It is difficult to identify a "typical" Forest Service architectural style within Region One. Most people familiar with the many administrative properties constructed by the Forest Service would agree that similarities exist when viewed from a regional perspective, however, when two individual properties are compared, materials, construction techniques, and architectural design may differ dramatically. The two themes consistent in the historical architecture of the Forest Service are that its buildings are, at all times, functional, and that they blend with their natural or cultural environment.

Individual buildings and/or complexes in remote areas were constructed to give a "rustic" look to the property. The "rustic" look was achieved through selection of log construction or the finishing materials for frame buildings. Formal architectural stylistic elements can be found in rustic buildings, and reflect either the popular style of the period (as in 1920s Bungalow style buildings) or later, the formal training of regional architects (such as in the 1930s and 1940s buildings complexes designed by Fox).

It is also obvious that the people making decisions about the style of building constructed at a particular site, worked from a sophisticated mental template of what would be appropriate and correct for representation of the Forest Service and its mission. Although these ideas changed through time, Forest Service architects and builders tended to be conservative, and it is this conservatism which produced the collection of buildings that today reflect the historical character of the Forest Service.

⁸⁸ Judging from the correspondence between offices, this appears to have been a tedious and often frustrating occupation of all concerned. For some properties, the correspondence concerning a single building will span a two or three year time period.

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Several buildings within the Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District reflect the evolution of Forest Service construction. The earliest building remaining at the property is the Main Cabin constructed in 1925. The building was built in accordance with plans developed by Thomas W. Buckley of the Regional Office and reflects its period of construction. At the time it was built, the location was quite remote resulting in the use of locally available resources, specifically logs. Also common to Forest Service buildings at the time was the use of Craftsman touches including the exposed rafters, the use of wood shingles to clad the enclosed entry and gable ends, the use of a hipped roof to cover the entry, multiple lite-windows, and an open floor plan.

The two garages and the barn in the district, all constructed in the 1930s, reflect the next generation of utilitarian Forest Service buildings. All three were designed in striking similarity to plans put forth in the 1935 Region One handbook on construction and reflecting a shift to formalized architectural drawings which emulated a rustic style. Region One, under the supervision of Clyde Fickes assisted by architect William J. Fox, developed the "Improvement Handbook," that provided standardized architectural plans for the construction of buildings at ranger stations. These plans emphasized a "Rustic" architectural style to blend buildings with their surroundings. The plans were modest to accommodate the practical needs of administrative facilities.

The storehouse/fire cache, likely moved in from another Forest Service district, was designed in the "Plan C-2" style. Likely constructed around 1936, the storehouse/fire cache bears a resemblance to Main Cabin in terms of style; however, its classification as a C-2 style reflects its patterning from the 1935 Handbook.

Today, the Rock Creek Ranger Station reflects its 1920s and 1930s period of use. The standing buildings would still be recognized by the architects and planners who helped shape and define Region One.

Architect

Unfortunately, little is known regarding Thomas W. Buckley, architect of the Main Cabin at Rock Creek Ranger Station. Born April 14, 1887 and hailing from Manhattan, Montana, Mr. Buckley graduated from Montana State College in Bozeman in 1914 with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering. Soon after his graduation, in 1915, he was in Anaconda, MT serving as Chairman for the B. H. & P. R. R.⁸⁹ The same year, Mr. Buckley stated he was a single person employed as an electrical worker for the A.C.M. Company in Anaconda.⁹⁰ In 1922, he

⁸⁹ The Daily Missoulian, 1914.

⁹⁰ Thomas W. Buckley, U.S. World War I Draft Registration Card, 1917-1918, found at http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-g&new=1&rank=1&gsfn=Thomas+W.&gsfn_x=0&gsln=Buckley&gsln_x=0&msypnftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msypn=485&msypnPlInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c485%7c0%7c0%7c&msbpnftp=Montana%2c+USA&msbpn=29&msbpnPlInfo=5-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c0%7c0%7c0%7c&msrdy=1924&msrpnftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msrpn=485&msrpnPlInfo=7-

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married Essie Kimball Grant.⁹¹ Mr. Buckley passed away in 1927 and is buried at the Saint James Cemetery in McMinnville, Oregon.⁹²

[http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-c&new=1&rank=1&gsfn=Thomas+W.&gsfn_x=0&gsln=Buckley&gsln_x=0&msypn_ftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msypn=485&msypn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c485%7c0%7c0%7c&msbpn_ftp=Montana%2c+USA&msbpn=29&msbpn_PInfo=5-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c0%7c0%7c0%7c&msrpy=1924&msrpn_ftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msrpn=485&msrpn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c485%7c0%7c0%7c&msydy=1925&cpxt=1&cp=12&catbucket=rstp&MSAV=1&uidh=fm1&pcat=34&h=74049&db=FS1MontanaCoMarriages&indiv=1&ml_rpos=1](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-c&new=1&rank=1&gsfn=Thomas+W.&gsfn_x=0&gsln=Buckley&gsln_x=0&msypn_ftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msypn=485&msypn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c485%7c0%7c0%7c&msydy=1925&cpxt=1&cp=12&catbucket=rstp&MSAV=1&uidh=fm1&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=1053600&db=WW1draft&indiv=1&ml_rpos=2&hovR=1), accessed April 6, 2016.

⁹¹ Thomas W. Buckley, in the Montana, County, Marriages, 1865-1950, found at http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-c&new=1&rank=1&gsfn=Thomas+W.&gsfn_x=0&gsln=Buckley&gsln_x=0&msbpy=1887&msbpy_x=1&msbdp=1&msbpn_ftp=Gallatin+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msbpn=1108&msbpn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c1108%7c0%7c0%7c&msydy=1925&msypn_ftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msypn=485&msypn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c485%7c0%7c0%7c&cpxt=1&cp=12&MSAV=1&uidh=fm1&pcat=34&h=54599913&db=FindAGraveUS&indiv=1&ml_rpos=2&hovR=1, accessed April 6, 2016.

⁹² Thomas W. Buckley, Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current, found at http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-c&new=1&rank=1&gsfn=Thomas+W.&gsfn_x=0&gsln=Buckley&gsln_x=0&msbpy=1887&msbpy_x=1&msbdp=1&msbpn_ftp=Gallatin+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msbpn=1108&msbpn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c1108%7c0%7c0%7c&msydy=1925&msypn_ftp=Carbon+County%2c+Montana%2c+USA&msypn=485&msypn_PInfo=7-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3248%7c29%7c0%7c485%7c0%7c0%7c&cpxt=1&cp=12&MSAV=1&uidh=fm1&pcat=34&h=54599913&db=FindAGraveUS&indiv=1&ml_rpos=2&hovR=1, accessed April 6, 2016.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9.49

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 45.157062 | Longitude: -109.303460 |
| 2. Latitude: 45.158024 | Longitude: -109.300722 |
| 3. Latitude: 45.156280 | Longitude: -109.300505 |
| 4. Latitude: 45.155716 | Longitude: -109.303244 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 12 | Easting: 633347 | Northing: 5001798 |
| 2. Zone: 12 | Easting: 633560 | Northing: 5001910 |
| 3. Zone: 12 | Easting: 633581 | Northing: 5001716 |
| 4. Zone: 12 | Easting: 633368 | Northing: 5001649 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the district is bordered by the McDonald Ditch to the north, private development to the east, the West Fork of Rock Creek to the south, and an arbitrary line to the west which divides the district headquarters area from the maintenance area.

The current boundary for the district is located within the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 6, T8S, R20E, Montana Principal Meridian (7.5' Red Lodge West, 1996).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The present boundary was drawn to include the resources within the headquarters area.

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city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620
e-mail: jboughton@mt.gov
telephone: (406) 444-3647
date: April 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

Rock Creek Ranger Station
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- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600 x 1200 pixels (minimum), 3000 x 2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

See Continuation Sheets.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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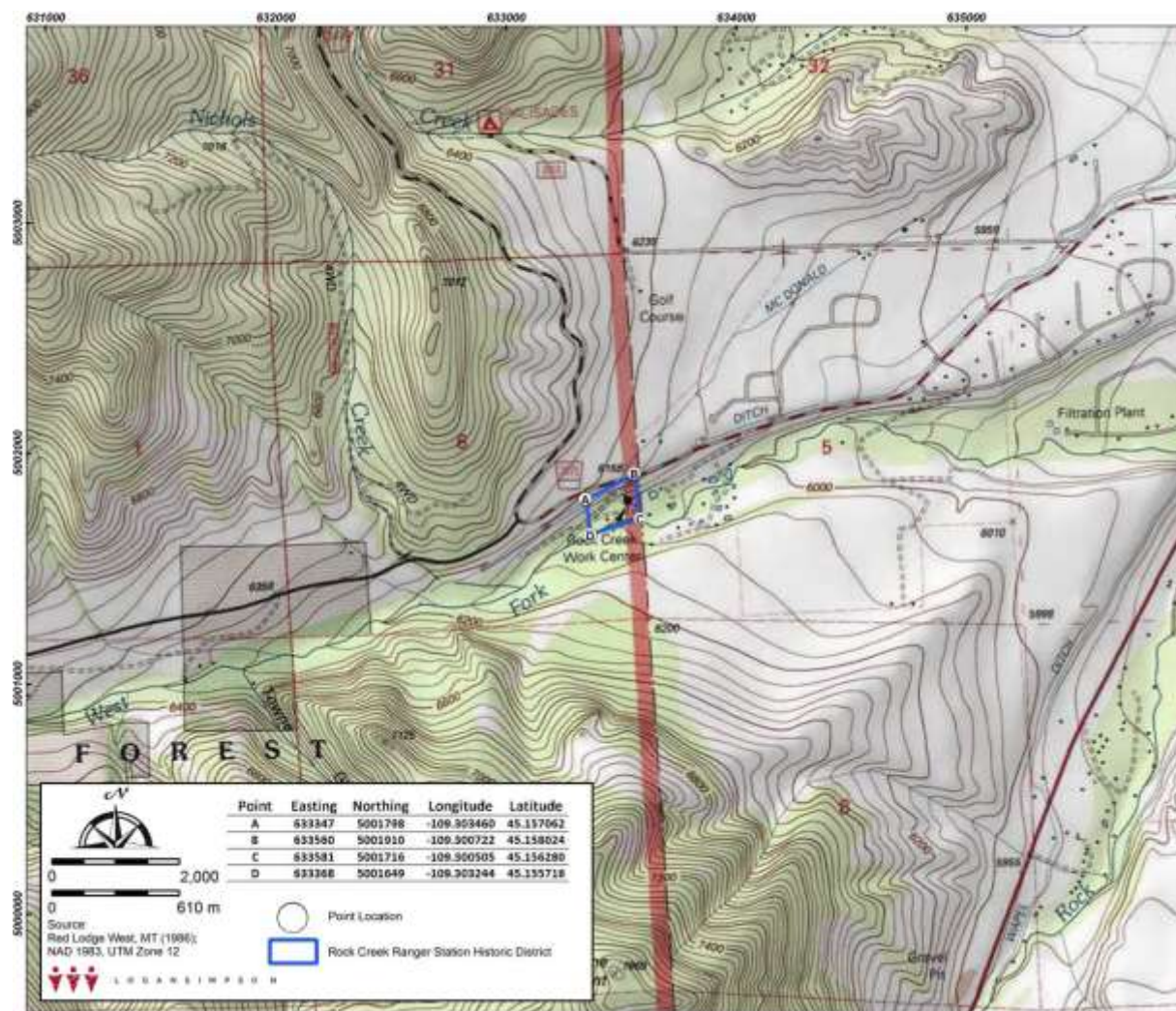
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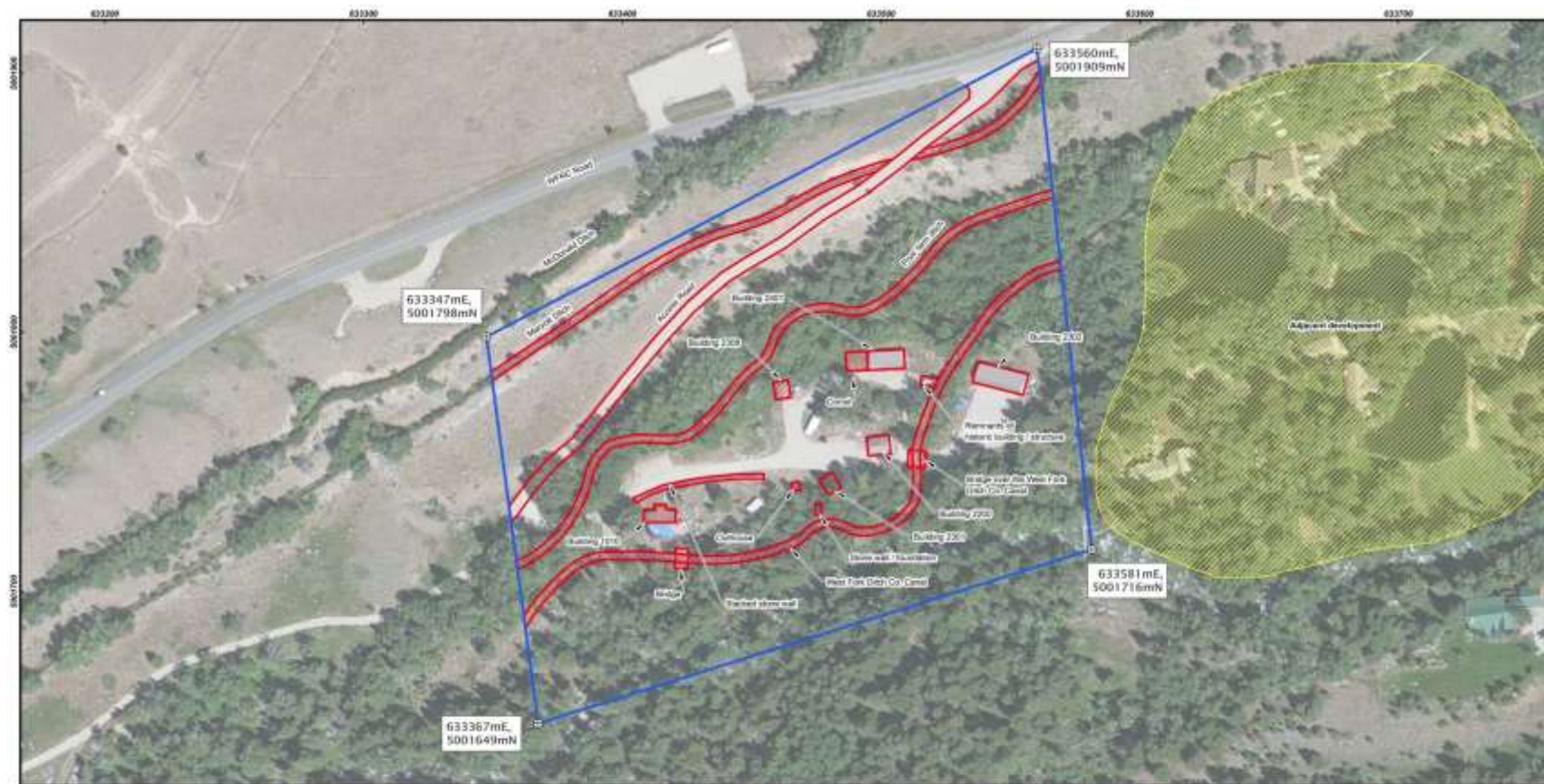
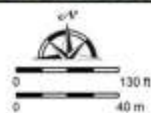


Image Source:
Google Earth imagery (2015)
NAD 1983, UTM Zone 12

Rock Creek Ranger Station

Key

- Contributing resource
- Non-contributing resource



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Photolog

All Photos:

Name of Property:	Rock Creek Ranger Station Historic District
City or Vicinity:	Red Lodge
County:	Carbon County
State:	MT
Name of Photographer:	Greta Rayle
Date of Photographs:	April 2015
Location of Original Digital Files:	51 W. Third Street Suite 450, Tempe, AZ 85281

Photo #1 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0001)
Main Cabin Building #1010, facing southeast

Photo #2 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0002)
Main Cabin Building #1010, facing northwest

Photo #3 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0003)
Storehouse Building #2301, facing southeast-east

Photo #4 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0004)
Barn Building #2401, facing northwest

Photo #5 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0005)
Two Stall Garage Building #2200, facing northeast

Photo #6 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0006)
Multi- Stall Garage Building #2302, facing northeast

Photo #7 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0007)
Tack House Building #2308, facing northeast

Photo #8 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0008)
Outhouse, facing southeast

Photo #9 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0009)
Stone Wall beside building #1010, facing southwest

Photo #10 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0010)
Stone Wall/Foundation, facing southeast

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Photo #11 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0011)

Building Remnants, facing southwest

Photo #12 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0012)

Access Road, facing southwest

Photo#13 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0013)

Circulation Road, facing east

Photo#14 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0014)

Bridge, facing southwest

Photo#15 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0015)

Maryott Ditch, facing northeast

Photo#16 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0016)

Maryott Ditch, facing northeast

Photo#17 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0017)

Maryott Ditch, facing west

Photo#18 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0018)

West Fork Ditch Company Canal, facing southwest-south

Photo#19 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_019)

Headgate of West Fork Ditch Company Canal, facing west-southwest

Photo#20 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_020)

Wood Post-and-Rail Corral, facing northwest

Photo#21 (MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreek RangerStationHD_0021)

Bridge remnants over the West Fork Ditch Company Canal, facing north

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Photograph 1. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0001. Northern (main) and western elevations of the Main Cabin (Building #1010), facing southeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 2. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0002. Southern and eastern elevations of the Main Cabin (Building #1010), facing west-northwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 3. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0003. Storehouse/fire cache building (Building #2301), facing east (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 4. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0004. Barn (Building #2401), facing northwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 5. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0005. Two stall garage (Building #2220), facing northeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 6. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0006. Multi- stall garage (Building #2302), facing northeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 7. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0007. Tack house (Building #2308), facing northeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 8. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0008. Outhouse, facing southeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 9. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0009. Stacked stone wall/foundation to the southwest of the storehouse/fire cache (Building #2301), facing southeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 10. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0010. Possible wall or foundation to the north of the two stall garage (Building #2200), facing southwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 11. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0011. Rock Creek Ranger Station access road, showing the gate at its northern end, facing southwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 12. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0012. Rock Creek Ranger Station circulation road, showing the two-stall garage, facing east (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 13. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0013. Stacked stone wall to the north of the main cabin (Building #1010), facing southwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 14. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0014. Bridge, facing southwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 15. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0015. Maryott Ditch as it appears within the maintenance yard, facing northeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 16. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0016. Maryott Ditch, steel pipe culvert and concrete wall to the west of the District's access road, facing northeast (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 17. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0017. Maryott Ditch, showing the stone and concrete culvert on the east side of the District's access road, facing west (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 18. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0018. West Fork Ditch Company Canal, facing southwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 19. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0019. Headgate associated with the West Fork Ditch Company Canal, facing west-southwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 20. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0020. Post and pole corral, facing northwest (Source: Logan Simpson, 2015).

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Photograph 21. MT_CarbonCounty_RockCreekRangerStationHD_0021. Remnants of a bridge spanning the West Fork Ditch Company canal, facing north. Note that the former bridge abutments are currently being used to support a wooden plank footbridge.